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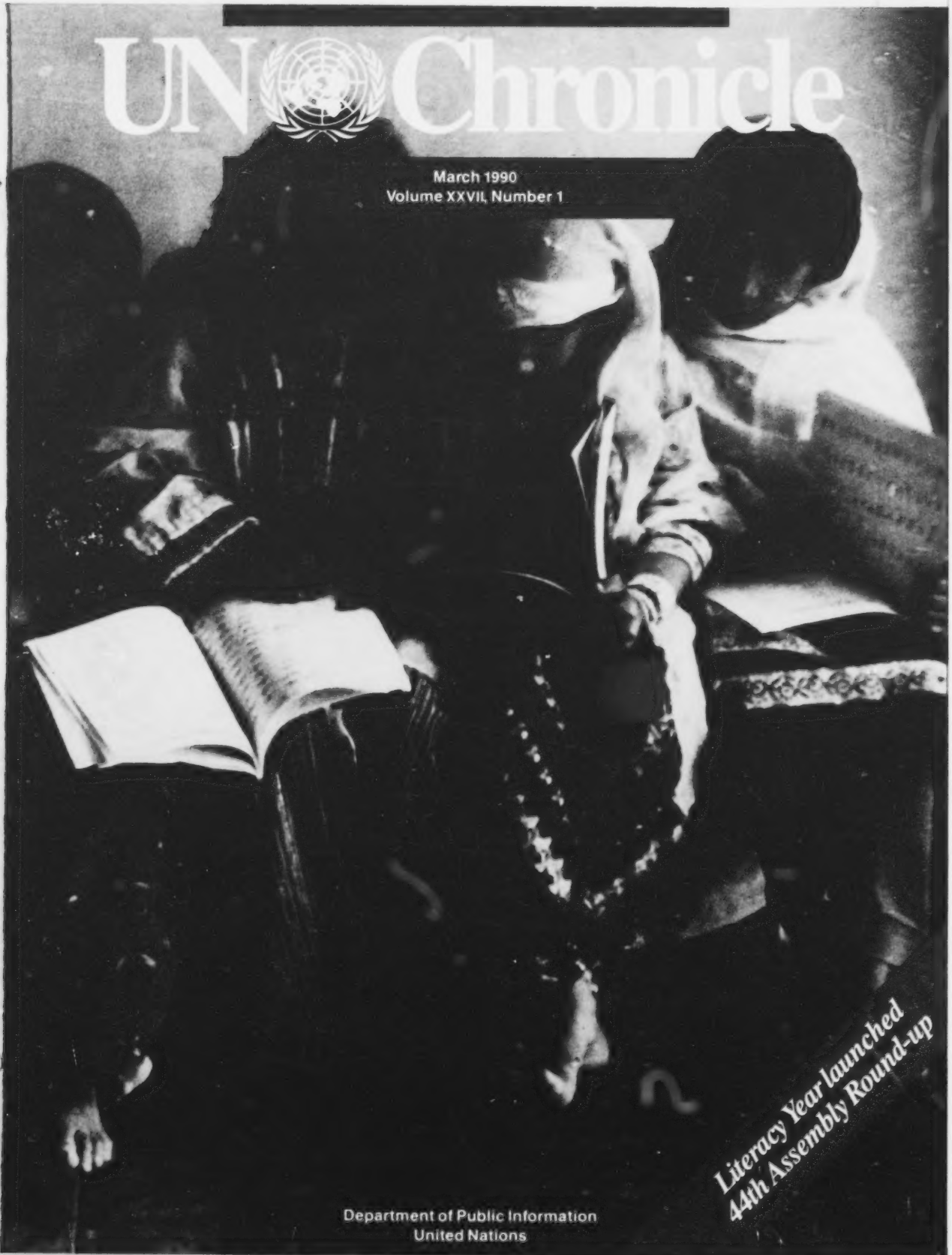

Literacy Year launched
44th Assembly Round-up

Department of Public Information
United Nations

Literacy: 'Not an impossible dream'

COVER PICTURE: **A group of schoolgirls read during their noon break, outside their Karachi, Pakistan, schoolhouse. The colourful scene captured the imagination of UN staff photographer John Isaac, who happened to stroll by on his way to another assignment. He hid behind a wall and shot the prize-winning photo which provides the cover for Issue 1, 1990, of the *UN Chronicle*. (It received an award in the 1987 Nikon International Photographic Contest.)**

"Widespread literacy is an enormous challenge, but it is not an impossible dream", said Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, on 6 December at UN Headquarters in New York, as he launched International Literacy Year, 1990, with what he called "an air of hope". The powerful, evocative image of these young women seems to confirm that dream and that hope.

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UN CHRONICLE

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXVII Number 1

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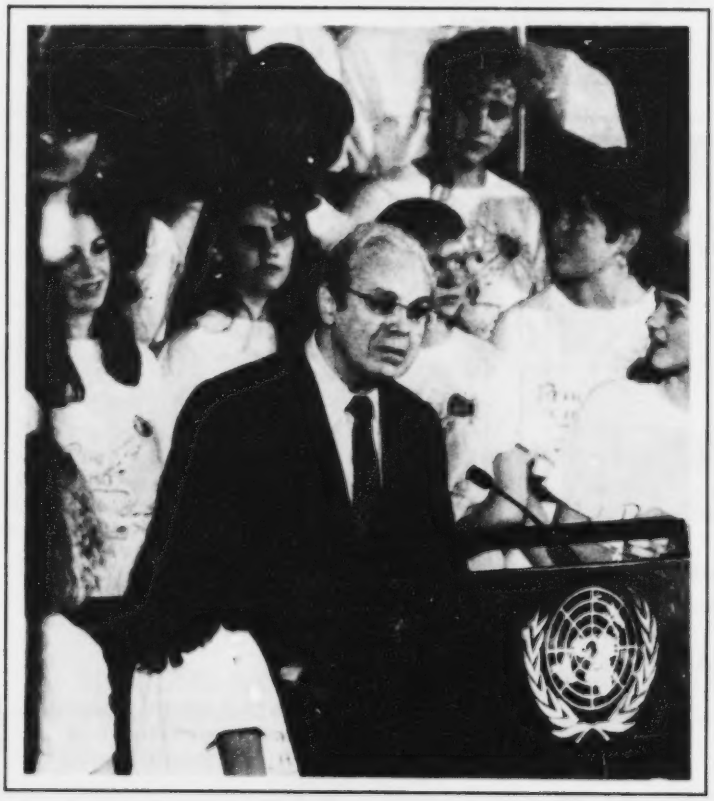
READEX FICHE

THE 38th FLOOR

Excerpts from statements by UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar made between 1 October and 31 December 1989



UN Photo 89309

At the International Day of Peace concert, 1989.

Turning to the UN...

As we observe United Nations Day this year, there are growing signs that international relations may be entering a new and more positive era. As rarely before, nations are now recognizing that they must address international problems multilaterally, through consultation and compromise. And, increasingly, they are turning to the United Nations. At such a time, it is encouraging that the search for the bases of peace between the most powerful nations is also finding practical expression within the world Organization. There is a growing determination on their part to work together with the other members of the Security Council and, indeed, with the membership of the Organization as a whole, for the resolution of certain long-standing disputes. Moreover, the dangers of the new generation of global problems, such as the degradation of the environment and drug abuse, have compelled all nations to realize that solutions can only be found through collective action.

—On the occasion of United Nations Day, 24 October

The yearning of peoples...

The yearning of peoples all over the world for their basic human dignity and their growing demand for the fulfilment of their human rights now constitute political facts of paramount importance. We have but to look at various situations of conflict around the globe to see how discrimination and the denial of fundamental rights engender resentment and violence that tear apart the fabric of peace.

—On Human Rights Day, 10 December

A real threat...

The threat of further proliferation of nuclear weapons is a very real one. If not fully addressed, it may well jeopardize the constructive atmosphere that has recently emerged in various international fora and reverse the positive processes taking place in international relations generally. Only expeditious and decisive measures of nuclear disarmament can effectively discourage such a possibility from occurring.

—On the occasion of Disarmament Week, 24-30 October

Where the social fabric is woven...

The home and family are the nucleus of the global community. The home is where we bring up our children, where we find our values, where we develop our abilities: the home is where the fabric of society is woven. Today, there are over 1 billion people who do not have adequate shelter. If present trends continue, the number of homeless and those with inadequate shelter will increase by many millions each year. Without proper shelter, a stable family life becomes almost impossible.

—On the occasion of World Habitat Day, 2 October

Facing a seminal question...

The use of science-based technologies is one of the major characteristics of our age. Information technologies, for example, including computers, satellites and sensors, have created a kind of planetary electronic nervous system. In addition, the time lag between scientific discovery and technical application now has narrowed. New discoveries are now applied in a matter of years rather than decades and this is likely to accelerate. The world faces a seminal question: has technology become an independent force, propelled by its own motion and charting its own course, or can it still be channelled, controlled and applied as a means to improve human life?

—To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 1979 Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development, 26 October

A new open-mindedness...

Over the years, the United Nations has launched peace-keeping missions in a variety of situations. All these were undertaken during a phase of international relations overshadowed by the cold war. Now, when the frozen positions of that dark and dangerous phase have given way to a new open-mindedness and there is a much greater willingness to look at situations of conflict from the common standpoint of peace, it is foreseeable that peace-keeping missions will have to play an even more versatile role. They will have to be adjusted to types of situations not encountered before. This will inevitably affect their structure and scale and it will certainly require that they be provided with resources commensurate with the mandate given to them.

—At the Conference organized by Parliamentarians for Global Action at United Nations Headquarters, 2 November

Determining their own destinies...

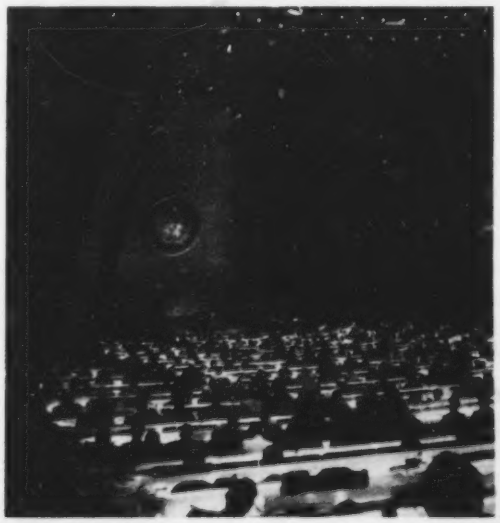
As we prepare to enter a new decade in a vastly improved political climate, let us recall the basic objectives and strategies of the Declaration. Let us rededicate ourselves to work together to alleviate poverty; to ensure food security; to protect the environment; to promote better health care, education, and adequate shelter for all; to improve the status of women and the well-being of less advantaged groups and to ensure democratic participation by peoples in determining their own destinies.

—On the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, 11 December

44th General Assembly

A turning point in UN history

Towards a search for common ground



UN Photo 174375/E. Debelle

The General Assembly—a sensitive barometer of the world's political climate—was swept at its forty-fourth session by an irresistible movement away from ideological confrontation and towards a search for a common ground, even on some of the thorniest international issues.

'A constructive and co-operative spirit. . .'

UN Photo

A "constructive and co-operative spirit" characterized debates for the most part, Assembly President Joseph N. Garba told the press on 18 December. And in an end-of-the-year message, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar called 1989 "a historic and epoch-making year".

As the world body adjourned its deliberations on 29 December, after a 15-week session which began on 19 September, many delegates were already hailing the forty-fourth Assembly as a turning point in United Nations history—the moment when a true global consciousness was finally emerging.

An intense awareness of the need for consensus, negotiation and political settlement as tools for human survival seemed to permeate the Assembly as it took groundbreaking action on the environment, human rights, and the fight against drugs.

Other crucial issues related to peace and security, disarmament, economic and social matters, decolonization and international law.

Two landmark Conventions were adopted by consensus—on the rights of the child, and on curbing the activities of mercenaries. A historic Declaration on *Apartheid* and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa was agreed upon at the sixteenth special session, devoted to that issue (12-14 December).

In a major breakthrough, the Assembly launched negotiations on a convention to protect the Earth's climate, for adoption in 1992 at a world conference on environment and development, to be held in Brazil. It also agreed on a moratorium, by 1992, on ecologically destructive driftnet fishing.

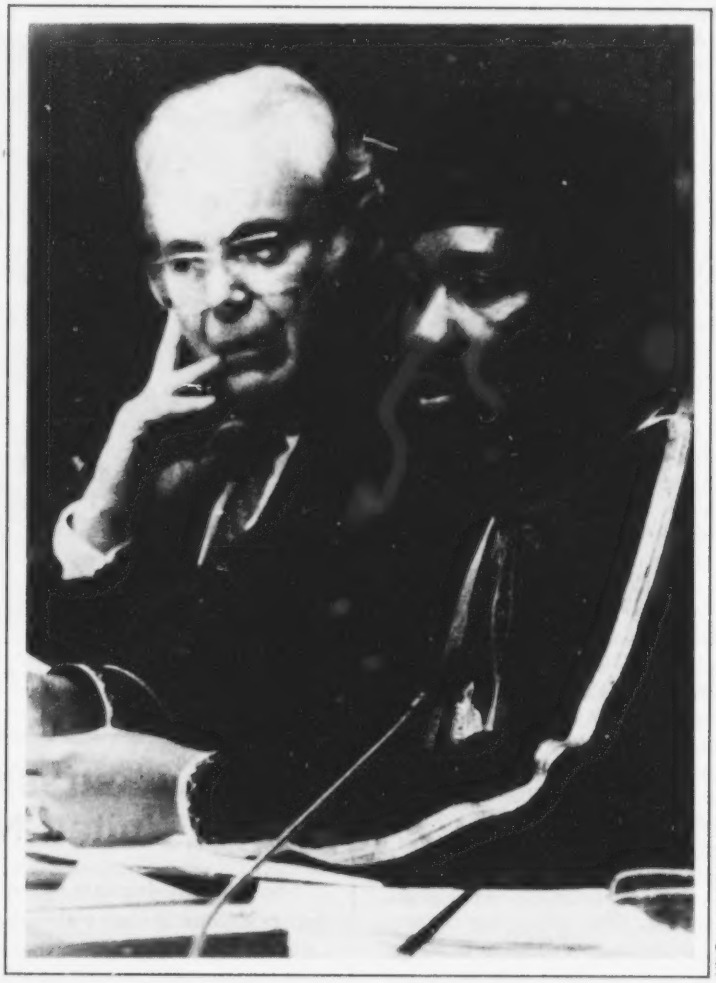
Other achievements:

A special Assembly session in February 1990 will consider urgent action against the drug menace. The feasibility of a UN anti-drug strike force and of an international criminal court able to prosecute drug traffickers will be studied.

A protocol committing countries to the abolition of the death penalty was adopted and opened for signature.

Sixty-five per cent of the 331 Assembly resolutions were adopted by consensus. A record 161 agenda items were considered.

The Assembly decided not to discuss the successful but delicate Namibian independence process. Cyprus and Iran-Iraq were among issues deferred to the next session.



UN Photo 174379/S Lwin

A true global consciousness emerging...

Cold war ending

In a powerful symbol of the end of the cold war, the Soviet Union and the United States, for the first time in history, jointly proposed a political resolution to the Assembly.

The General Assembly, in adopting without a vote on 15 November resolution 44/23, sought to strengthen the UN role in maintaining international peace and security. In what amounted to a vote of confidence in the future of the Organization, it encouraged all

States to use the UN framework to consult and co-operate on those matters and urged them to abide by the UN Charter.

The thaw between the super-Powers had a positive impact on the Assembly, as did the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe, although these were not on the agenda of the forty-fourth session. But the changing climate in the heart of Europe certainly made the atmosphere at the Assembly "more conducive to achieving positive results", Assembly President Garba said.

"The events of recent months have vividly demonstrated the dynamism that popular aspirations give to international affairs", Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar stated.

And he added: "There is little doubt that these developments have unfrozen the old fears and animosities which dominated the world for decades. They hold tangible promise of ending the incessant arms race. They strengthen respect for the principles of human rights and the self-determination of peoples. They have thus phenomenally advanced the interests of global peace."

However, he warned that the new year should be approached "with a renewed sense of purpose and hope, not with a sense of euphoria or passivity", since there were still pending in the world a number of "old stubborn problems, unrelated to the cold war". Regional conflicts still raged, grave economic disparities prevailed and destitution was still the lot of the majority of the human race.

Encouraging success

The Assembly approached some of those "old stubborn problems" with an encouraging degree of success.

The world body adopted its first consensus resolution on Western

UN Photo 174479/M. Grant

Dramatic changes in Eastern Europe...

'Big Five' stress important role of United Nations

The Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council have stated that the United Nations has an important role to play "at the present time of positive change in the international political climate from confrontation to relaxation and interaction among States".

On 29 September, the Ministers—Qian Qichen of China; Roland Dumas of France; Eduard Shevardnadze of the USSR; John Major of the United Kingdom; and James Baker of the United States—issued a joint communiqué after meeting with Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

UN peace-keeping operations illustrate the vital role of the Organization in preventing and resolving regional conflicts, the Ministers said, welcoming active UN involvement in that area and in "trends towards dialogue and peaceful settlement of disputes which had developed in recent years".

The Ministers stressed the importance of the effective functioning of those operations and expressed their satisfaction at the improved working relations within the Council and with the Secretary-General.

Sahara since 1983. The Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) were asked to intensify their efforts so that a referendum on self-determination could be organized. Fifty-three countries had abstained in the vote on the 1988 resolution.

Reacting to the news that Argentina and the United Kingdom had agreed to hold talks in Madrid on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), the Assembly postponed consideration of that question to its 1990 session.

And in a resolution that may open the way for a "Namibia-style" solution to the Kampuchean problem, the Assembly specifically stated that the UN should supervise and control withdrawal of all foreign forces from that nation and that "internationally supervised free, fair and democratic elections" should take place there.

President Garba declared that there had been "a narrowing in the areas of differences". As in past years, the Kampuchean text repeatedly cites "the non-return to the universally condemned policies and practices of a recent past" as a principal component of a political settlement.

For the second year in a row, the Assembly adopted by consensus and without debate a resolution on Afghanistan.

The "Islamic character" of that nation was added for the first time to the list of elements whose preservation would be essential for a peaceful solution. The others are sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-alignment.

Intractable problems

While tangible progress was felt in many areas, some problems remained seemingly "intractable", the Assembly President said. One of them was the question of the Middle East. The Assembly adopted seven resolutions, calling once again for the convening of an international peace conference.

UN Photo 174693/J. Isaac

The King and Queen of Swaziland *(left)* and the King of Lesotho *(second from right)* at a UN reception.

Consideration of a draft resolution seeking "to upgrade the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the Assembly" was deferred, although the matter was left open "because it is an important matter", President Garba said, regretting that "unnecessary battle lines were drawn and we were on the verge of some serious catastrophe".

On a positive note, he said that the need for peace in the Middle East "came out loud and clear" in the Assembly debates. "I think that now, more than ever before, everyone realizes the need to have a genuine peace in the Middle East, and everyone is working to achieve that result", he stated.

In another corner of the planet, the ups and downs of the Central America peace process—what Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar poignantly called "the cycle of great expectations and deep disappointments"—was compounded in late December by the United States intervention in Panama, which the Assembly strongly deplored. Earlier, it had backed once more growing UN involvement in the peace process in that region and efforts to implement the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America.

UN Photo 174696/M. Grant

Trying to solve seemingly intractable problems...

Survival and conciliation

The emergence of a global consciousness of survival and conciliation was reflected in the fact that 22 of 59 texts on disarmament were adopted without a vote.

Three resolutions on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons were approved without a vote, all assigning "high priority" to work on a chemical weapons convention. The world body also affirmed its "strong interest" in avoiding an arms race in nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction on the sea bed and the ocean soil and subsoil.

Another consensus resolution urged the USSR and the United States to accelerate negotiations towards "early agreement on the drastic reduction of their nuclear arsenals".

Nuclear weapons continued to dominate the Assembly's disarmament agenda. But only 3 of 21 resolutions on this issue were adopted by consensus. Among those put to a vote was one stating that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban is "the highest priority step" towards nuclear disarmament.

UN Photo 174512/D Yeandle

A new enthusiasm for peace-keeping

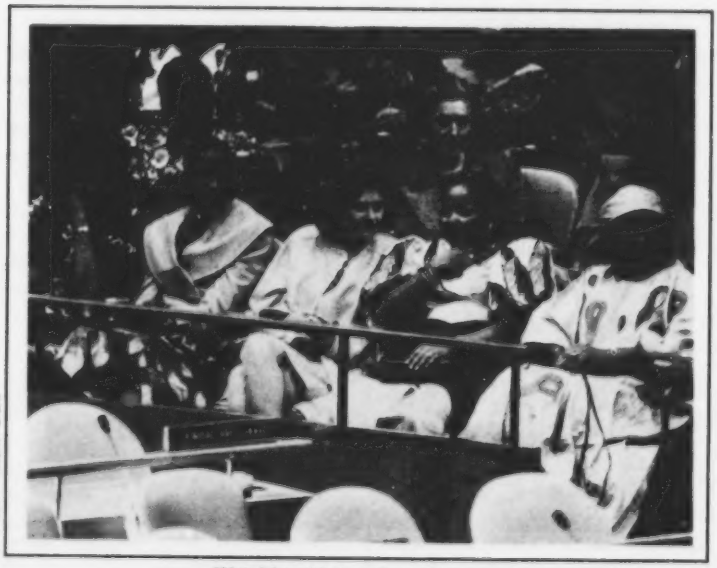
A more constructive international mood allowed the forty-fourth Assembly to explore in depth ways to improve UN peace-keeping and conflict-prevention capabilities.

In his annual state-of-the-UN report *(A/44/1)*, released as the Assembly session opened in September, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar saw "a new demand, and a new enthusiasm for peace-keeping operations" and suggested that countries earmark stand-by troops for that purpose.

In a step in that direction, the Assembly empowered the Secretary-General to ask States to identify personnel and resources they would be ready to contribute to peace-keeping operations, and to set up a registry of potential contributions.

Money remained another problem. "The financing of peace-keeping has a long and not very creditable history", Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said, although the price-tag is "minimal" when compared to the costs of war, he noted.

The Assembly asked for continued efforts by the Secretary-General to improve peace-keeping funding. Setting up a special reserve fund for peace-keeping supported by all Member States was a promising possibility, among others, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said.



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Watching history in action...

Averting war

Incipient conflicts should be kept under global watch so that they could be defused before they flared up, and the UN should be equipped for that task, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar advised in his sweeping annual report.

The UN should assemble a solid fact-finding capability, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar stated, suggesting that the world Organization have access to space-based and other sophisticated surveillance systems to enable it to monitor potential conflict situations.

"Timely, accurate and unbiased information" was a prerequisite to activate the Organization's potential to avert wars, he went on. But information available to the UN about the world's trouble spots was in most cases "manifestly insufficient", he explained.

UN Photo 174753

Fact-finding capabilities are important...

The Assembly asked its Special Committee on the Charter of the UN and the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization to give priority to the fact-finding question when it meets from 12 February to 2 March 1990.

It also decided that a commission of good offices, mediation or conciliation may be set up within the UN whenever States parties to a dispute request it. Such a commission would be made up of three States not parties to the dispute.

UN Photo

Corridors of consensus

In the sometimes shadowy, blue and gold Hall of the General Assembly, history unfolds even as it occurs. Emissaries from nearly every nation on Earth politely cap their ideological differences, formally expressing their views on the world's affairs in at least one of six official UN languages. Seated at the curving rows of desks, arranged alphabetically by country, the delegates tune in via earphone as a colleague speaks at the black marble podium adorned with the UN seal. Sometimes they take notes, perhaps saving choice phrases for future use, sometimes they doodle.

As a matter of protocol, the speaker first addresses the General Assembly President seated above and behind him. However, it is really to the assembled dignitaries that he speaks. On occasion, a protest may emanate from the floor over inflammatory language or a point of order.

But, for the most part, words are carefully chosen and views expressed in the most polite and ceremonious terms. When all representatives have had their say, a vote is taken, with each country's position displayed in neon lights on the voting board. Business proceeds smoothly—there are few surprises. Considering the diverse backgrounds and outlooks of those present, a remarkable orderliness prevails. But the efficiency of the proceedings is somewhat deceptive. It takes complex negotiations and compromise before a draft resolution is presented for adoption. Tedious exchanges over a word, even a comma, occur. All is complicated by nuance of language, and there are so many spoken here!

And it is very often in the corridors that consensus is reached, the nooks and crannies of the delegates' lounges, the elegant hallways of diplomacy, amidst fine art, tapestries and statues. In the vast North Delegates' Lounge, the more intimate South Lounge, the Viennese Coffee Bar, the quiet Indonesian Lounge with the statues of "Peace" and "Prosperity"—these are the places where most often matters are clarified and bargains struck. It is in these more private environments, rather than in the formality of the General Assembly Hall, that the true diplomacy of consensus and conciliation takes place.

—Geoff Reed

UN Photo 174472/P Sudhakaran

Japanese press conference at Headquarters, getting out the news...

Economic revival sought

While war and peace issues captured the headlines, most Assembly time was spent on bread-and-butter issues—those with a direct impact on the everyday life of ordinary people: from poverty, shelter, disease, hunger and environmental threats to drugs, crime and terrorism.

The estimated $1.32 trillion external debt—intimately related to the daily suffering of millions and affecting some 70 countries worldwide—was the focus of an intense debate in the Assembly's Second Committee (Economic and Financial).

A 14-paragraph resolution voted by the Assembly listed specific measures to end the debt crisis and revive economic growth in debt-ridden countries. The issue will be high on the agenda of the special Assembly session on international economic co-operation, scheduled for 23 to 27 April 1990 in New York.

Although there was "no doubt that some progress has been made, especially on the concept of debt reduction", economic growth had not materialized, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar told the Second Committee on 1 November.

There was concern among third world nations that the lessening of East-West tensions might further marginalize them from global decision-making. The possibility that some aid now earmarked for developing countries could be diverted to Eastern Europe was a source of worry.

President Garba cautioned: "We should not worry unduly about the *rapprochement* between the super-Powers", as long as the central role of the UN is accepted and multilateralism is given "primacy of place". The bilateral and multilateral approaches "can go in parallel together".

Helping people survive

The Assembly condemned terrorism as criminal and not justifiable, "wherever and by whomever committed" and expressed concern over the growing links between terrorist groups and drug traffickers.

Organized crime increasingly had a transnational character and international efforts against it should be stepped up, the Assembly stated. The Eighth UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (Havana, Cuba, 27 August-7 September 1990) would focus on the issue.

UN Photo

Moving towards a new era...

The Assembly considered the possibility of holding a fourth world conference on women in 1995 and a world conference on human rights. Greater awareness about AIDS transmission should be promoted by Governments, the World Health Organization (WHO) and others, it said.

Emergency assistance to Caribbean countries devastated by hurricane Hugo was approved, as was continuing economic aid to a large number of countries.

UN activities supporting African recovery will continue beyond 1990. Operation Lifeline Sudan will soon enter its second phase, focusing on the displaced population. The Assembly noted "with interest" the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for socio-economic recovery and transformation adopted in April 1989.

It proclaimed the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa. Work continued on the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, 1991-2000.

UN Photo

A different warmth . . .

American entertainer Pearl Bailey is serving for the fifth time as a United States Representative to the General Assembly. The late Saudi Arabian Ambassador Jamil Baroody referred to her as "a Pearl, not cultured by Mikimoto, but cultured in the art of the theatre and her genuine humanitarian attitude towards all those who know her". Ms. Bailey said she sees positive changes in the world Organization since her first Assembly in 1975. "I see a different warmth, a different bending. We're moving on to something . . .!"

As for her duties as a delegate, she said: "We've got to be there (in the Assembly Hall), to listen to each other, to show that we care about the things others care about".

Toward the 21st century

With an eye to the twenty-first century, the Assembly proclaimed the UN Decade of International Law (1990-1999), the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction starting in 1990, the International Space Year, 1992, and the International Year of the Family, 1994.

Preparations continued for the Second UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Paris, September 1990).

Looking back, the Assembly adopted a programme to observe in 1990 the 30th anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

It also observed the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries.

While plans to increase UN activities across the board through the end of the century forged ahead, with the Assembly approving a $2 billion 1990-1991 budget, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar warned that the Organization's financial prospects were "very grim indeed". The crisis would only be solved when all Member States paid their dues in full and on time, he said.

Although worried by the financial state of the Organization and warning against complacency now that international relations "may be entering a new and more positive era", the Secretary-General sounded an optimistic note in his traditional UN Day Message, on 24 October.

"For all the dangers and difficulties, the time is . . . full of hope", he stated, capturing the prevailing mood at the forty-fourth session of the Assembly and in much of the world.

ASSEMBLY ALMANAC

UNHCR Photo 16055/11/A Hollman

Basis for 'effective negotiations' on Cyprus exists

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has stated that a basis existed for "effective negotiations" leading to an overall agreement on Cyprus, provided the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides "manifest the necessary goodwill and recognize that a viable solution must satisfy the legitimate interests of both communities". Reporting on 7 December to the Security Council *(S/21010)*, the Secretary-General said each side needed to acknowledge issues considered essential by the other and be willing to negotiate reasonable solutions. Also, on 14 December, the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for six months until 15 June 1990.

Resolution on Western Sahara adopted by consensus

The General Assembly on 11 December welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to promote a just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara. By resolution 44/88, the world body also reaffirmed that the question of Western Sahara was a question of decolonization. In the first consensus resolution on the subject since 1983, the Assembly stressed the importance of the agreement in principle by the two parties to the conflict—Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (POLISARIO)—for holding a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, organized and supervised by the UN in co-operation with OAU.

Dialogue on Falklands (Malvinas) in progress

Following an agreement between Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume a dialogue regarding the Falklands (Malvinas) Islands, the Assembly on 1 November deferred consideration of the question until its forty-fifth session. The two nations have agreed on timing, agenda and conditions for substantive discussions, and to a formula to protect the position of each side with regard to sovereignty or territorial and maritime jurisdiction of the islands. After a Madrid meeting on 19 October, the two stated that all hostilities between them had ceased and neither would pursue claims against the other. In another action, the Assembly on 14 November called on all States to help promote the objectives of the 1986 Declaration of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic and to refrain from any action which might create or aggravate situations of tension and potential conflict in the region.

'Scrupulous respect' for Geneva Accords asked

The General Assembly, after reviewing reports of continuing violations of the 1988 Afghanistan peace agreements, has called for "scrupulous respect" for and faithful implementation of the Geneva Accords by all parties concerned. The agreements were concluded on 14 April 1988 under UN auspices. In adopting resolution 44/15 by consensus on 1 November, the Assembly called upon all parties concerned to work urgently for a comprehensive political solution, cessation of hostilities and creation of conditions of peace and normalcy that would enable Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homeland in safety and honour.

Sovereignty of Comoros over Mayotte reaffirmed

Reaffirming the sovereignty of Comoros over the island of Mayotte, the General Assembly on 18 October urged France to accelerate the process of negotiations to ensure the "effective and prompt" return of that island to the Comoros. By resolution 44/9, adopted by a vote of 128 to 1 (France), with 24 abstentions, France was also invited to honour the commitments entered into prior to the 1974 referendum on the self-determination of the Comoro Archipelago.

Assembly approves 1990-1991 budget by consensus

The General Assembly on 21 December for the first time since 1947 approved a programme budget for the United Nations by consensus. The amount: $1,974,634,000 for the biennium 1990-1991, a 5 per cent increase over the previous one. On 21 December, the Assembly reaffirmed the legal obligation of all Member States to finance the Organization's expenses as apportioned by it. On 8 December, the Secretary-General reported (*A/44/857*) that throughout 1989 the possibility of imminent bankruptcy had been a source of grave concern to him.

UN Photo 174941/M. Grant

New York City nets $830 million from UN presence

The United Nations presence in Manhattan brings an estimated $830 million to the city each year, the New York City Commission for the United Nations and Consular Corps reported on 11 December in its study "The Economic Impact of the Diplomatic Community on the City of New York". A total of some $860 million in UN-related revenue is offset by $25 million that New York City spends yearly on services for the UN and the foreign diplomatic corps, lost revenue for real property tax exemptions and uncollected parking fines and towing charges.

Fast procedures to aid refugees urged

The General Assembly on 15 December condemned violations of the rights and safety of refugees and asylum-seekers, in particular those perpetrated by military or armed attacks against refugee camps and settlements, forced recruitment into armed forces and other forms of violence. In adopting resolution 44/137, the Assembly also called on States to establish quick and effective procedures for determining refugee status and/or granting asylum. Thorvald Stoltenberg, the former Foreign Minister of Norway, was named High Commissioner as of 1 January 1990, to replace Jean-Pierre Hocké.

1992 endorsed as International Space Year

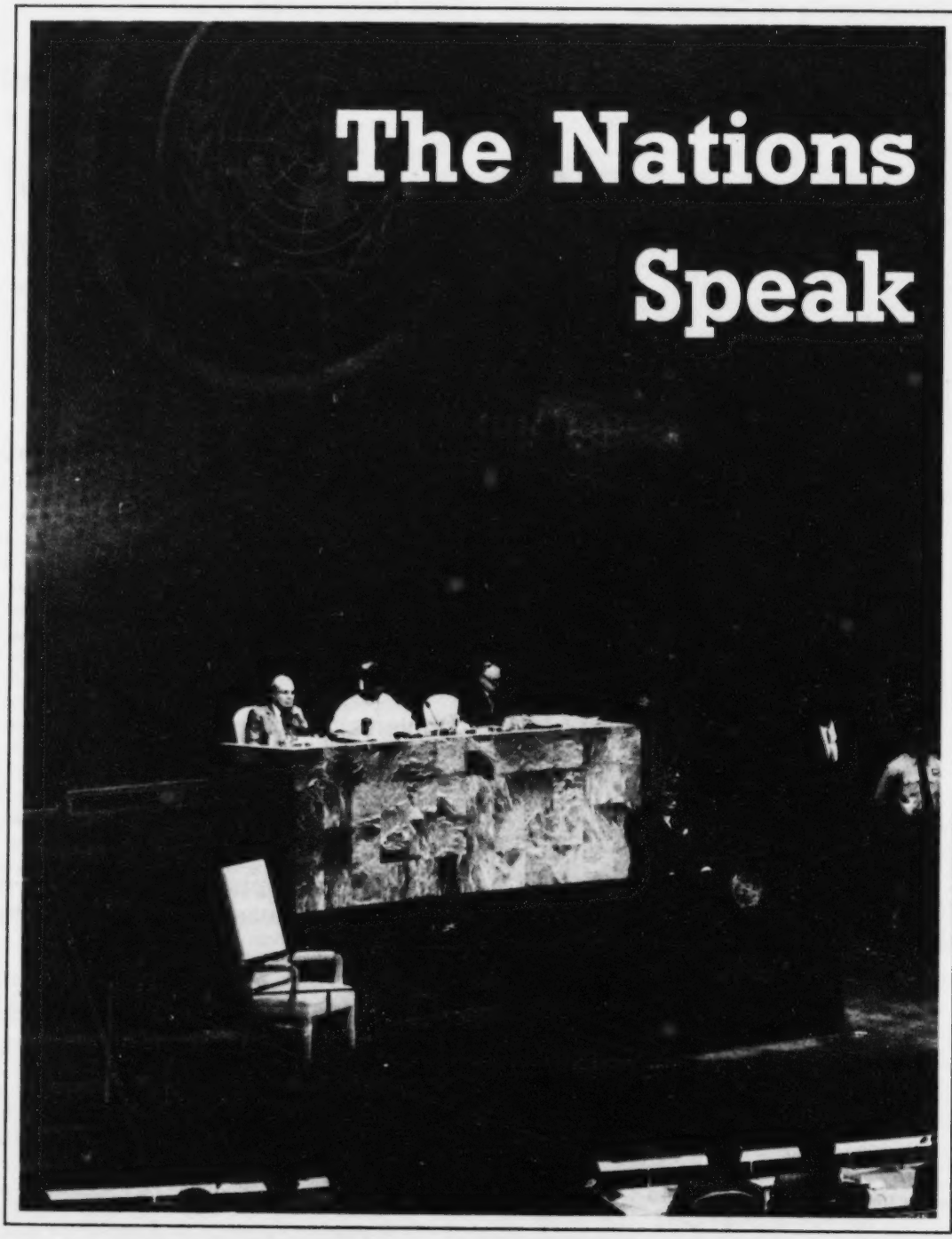
The General Assembly on 8 December endorsed the designation of the year 1992 as International Space Year, with international co-operation for the benefit and in the interests of all States, to be promoted throughout the year. The Assembly stated that more attention should be paid to the protection and preservation of the outer space environment, especially as it affected the Earth's environment. It called for research on the problem of collisions with space debris.

Universal participation in Sea-Law Convention urged

The General Assembly on 20 November *(44/26)* called on all States to safeguard the unified character of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and invited all States to make "renewed efforts to facilitate universal participation in the Convention". So far, it has received 159 signatures and 42 of the 60 ratifications or accessions required for its entry into force.

A story in *UN Chronicle*, 1989, No. 4 (page 59), on the United States-Italy case before a Chamber of the World Court, should have referred to allegations that Italian authorities, through their acts and omissions in respect of the company ELSI, rather than the company itself, had violated provisions of a 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between the two countries. The vote rejecting these allegations was 4 to 1. Reparations claimed by the United States were also rejected by the same vote.

The Nations Speak



UN Photo 174467/M. Grant

The general debate — 25 September to 12 October.

'The Choice is Ours'

"Let us acknowledge that we live in a world where we either swim or sink together", Assembly President Joseph N. Garba urged the Governments of the world represented in the majestic blue and gold Assembly Hall as he declared the general debate closed on 12 October. He was accurately summing up the predominant feeling throughout the three-week state-of-the-world review which traditionally opens each Assembly session.

In 14 days of debate, which began on 25 September, the plenary heard a host of speakers—154 in all—two Kings, Presidents, Prime Ministers and other top-level Ministers and 105 Foreign Ministers among them.

What Norway's Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland called "rapid globalization" was very much in the minds of many speakers as they tackled traditional war and peace issues along with an emerging twenty-first century agenda: environment, drugs, external debt and poverty, and human rights.

One way or another, all saw the United Nations as playing a central role in mankind's search for peace, justice and international co-operation.

While sharing numerous common concerns, speakers from each region brought their own accent to the view of the world revealed during those three weeks.

Reflecting a growing humanization of international affairs, the Soviet Union defended "freedom of choice" for every nation and the United States hailed the coming century as "the age of the individual".

Reacting to momentuous changes in the heart of their continent, Europeans talked about the end of the cold war, building a "common European home", the removal of walls—both symbolic and real.

Democracy and a change of guard from an older to a younger political generation were highlighted in speeches by Latin American and Caribbean representatives. Africans grappled with their continent's economic crisis and what they saw as a potentially explosive situation in southern Africa. The Asia and Pacific speakers worried about Afghanistan, refugees, the situation in Lebanon and other parts of the Middle East.

But it was clear from the torrent of speeches that "the pathos, poverty and despair in the third world", as Mr. Garba put it, continued to be the overriding concern of most of humanity.

The Assembly President hoped that the current super-Power thaw would trickle down and make the world a better place for rich and poor alike. And he entreated the Governments of the world to act with courage "to move beyond the threshold of a favourable international climate" into the realm of concerted global action. "The choice is ours", was Mr. Garba's forceful, laconic conclusion.

Africa

Major goals . . .

Economic recovery, Elimination of apartheid

UN Photo 174668/M Grant

Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko

Despite the successful independence process in Namibia, African nations speaking in the general debate remained concerned over what they saw as a potentially explosive situation in southern Africa because of the continuing existence of *apartheid*. The only hope for peace and stability in the region was its total eradication and replacement by a democratic system, it was often stated.

The international community should remain vigilant with regard to Namibia, many said, feeling that South Africa might somehow try to undermine the independence process from the inside.

The worsening economic and social situation of the continent was of equal concern to African speakers. Ongoing problems involved toxic waste dumping and other environment related activities, refugees, drought, desertification, famine and poverty, floods and widespread locust infestation. The continent is home to a majority of the world's least developed countries (LDCs).

It was stated that national economies had been gravely weakened by the crippling debt burden of $230 billion, reversing for the worse African living standards. While Africa had made courageous structural adjustment sacrifices, some said, the expected level of international support had not materialized. Such vital sectors as health and education had suffered immeasurably, it was stated. Remunerative prices for commodities had to improve.

Calls were made to extend the UN Programme of Action for the Recovery and Development of Africa beyond 1990. The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAFSAP) for socio-economic recovery and transformation—

unanimously adopted at joint meetings of the Ministers of Planning and Finance of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in April 1989—was seen as a basis for constructive dialogue between African countries and their development partners.

Speedy adoption of a world convention on cross-border transport and dumping of toxic wastes with appropriate penalties was vigorously advocated.

Delegates spoke of movement towards peace in Angola and Mozambique and the Chad-Libya agreement to end their lengthy conflict. Morocco and the POLISARIO Front were urged to agree to the OAU/UN plan for self-determination for Western Sahara. Speakers noted the 1989 treaty establishing the Arab Maghreb Union comprising Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Somalia was noted. Support was voiced for OAU efforts to mediate the dispute between Senegal and Mauritania.

From the debate . . .

ALGERIA Foreign Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali favoured transforming the ideological and military rivalry between the two super-Powers into "a relationship of partners who significantly contribute to the establishment of a genuine international front for world peace". He also said there was "no greater challenge for Africa than that posed by the *apartheid* régime in all its dimensions".

ANGOLA Foreign Minister Pedro de Castro Van Dunem maintained that UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) continued to be "a destabilizing element, not only internally in Angola but also in the region as a whole". Peace, he said, was the "patrimony of all mankind, which must fight in a united bloc in order to preserve it".

BENIN Daniel Tavema, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, said there could be no peace and

UN Photo 175027M Grant

no security in the world without the prospects of economic prosperity for all countries and all peoples. "Disarmament should serve development by permitting a significant increase in the resources of countries beset by hunger, disease and poverty."

BOTSWANA External Affairs Minister G.K.T. Chiepe said that while structural adjustment programmes might be necessary at times, they should not be regarded as "a panacea for all our economic problems, as this attitude sometimes results in the 'cure' being worse than the disease". Hunger, poverty, disease and other social ills remained "the order of the day in third world countries".

BURKINA FASO Foreign Minister Prosper Vokouma emphasized that the "defence of human rights begins with the promotion of a just international economic order". Some champions of human rights had enough compassion to defend freedom, but "not enough wisdom to defend human beings made of flesh and blood, not enough wisdom to stop children born and raised in disastrous circumstances from being condemned to a life of delinquency and crime".

BURUNDI Cyprien Mbonimpa, Minister for External Affairs and Co-operation, said: "We cannot gloss over criminal actions of certain industrialized societies in the northern hemisphere that are with impunity transferring toxic wastes to third world regions. The dangers that this poses to human, animal and vegetable life, present and future, has been denounced many times by the international community."

CAMEROON Foreign Minister Jacques Roger Booh-Booh proposed the UN establish an integrated administrative structure to co-ordinate and carry out various missions and operations decided upon by the Security Council for the maintenance of peace. The UN should play a larger, more active role in promoting international peace, security and co-operation.

CAPE VERDE Prime Minister Pedro Verona Pires said: "The lack of adequate human resources in independent African countries has been one of the major obstacles to the development of the continent." A new order in international relations was ahead, based not on ideological confrontation or strategic interests, but rather on a plurality of interests safeguarding aspirations for justice, liberty, well-being and development.

CHAD Permanent Representative Mahamat Ali Adoum hoped that his country's release of Libyan prisoners of war would open the way to a final settlement of the Chad-Libya conflict which had pitted "two brotherly States against each other". The Algiers Agreement bore witness to Chad's desire to live in peace with Libya, strictly respecting its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and basic rights.

COMOROS Said Kafé, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, hoped that the dialogue between France and Comoros would lead to a satisfactory

UN Photo 174823/M Grant

solution, based on law and justice, of the problem of the "Comorian island of Mayotte". The "redrawing of the international landscape" presupposed compliance by all States with the Charter, bearing in mind that "a group of countries, whatever its power, should not presume to be the custodian of the world or that other States should merely be bystanders".

CONGO Antoine Ndinga-Oba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, said: "As we turn our eyes to the future, let us hold fast to the hope that, as in political relations, confrontation will give way to dialogue between rich and poor, constructive dialogue aiming at a new, fairer and more equitable order."

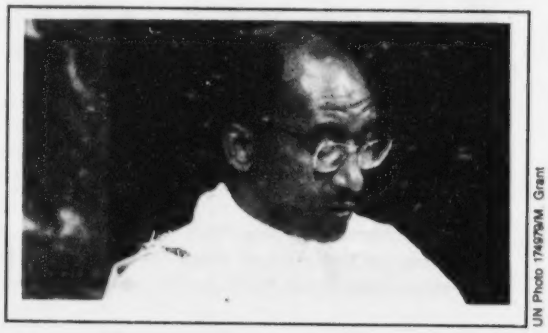
COTE D'IVOIRE Foreign Minister Siméon Aké said there could be no peace in the world "if only one region enjoys peace and is awash in opulence while others are ravaged by war and plunged into poverty which is gaining more and more ground". Africans lived in a "hostile economic climate, because of the selfishness of the developed countries, with their increased protectionism, and the mentality of those whose only motivation is easy profits".

DJIBOUTI Permanent Representative Roble Olhaye said that African nations faced formidable challenges in the 1990s in their efforts to improve living standards. "It would be inconsistent with moral justice and social equity if the improved climate of East-West relations bred complacency and neglect of third world issues."

EGYPT President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, also the current Chairman of OAU, said that deterioration of the African environment was due "mainly to poverty". What was needed was environmentally sound development, an end to dumping of nuclear and chemical debris on African territory, and clean technologies for local use. The problem was no longer one of growth and development, but of survival.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA Santiago Eneme Ovono, Minister-Delegate for Foreign Affairs, wanted an international code of conduct on the genuine transfer and exchange of technology. Third world countries needed a network of world-scope institutions and research centres to implement, develop and promote advanced technologies.

ETHIOPIA Foreign Minister Berhanu Bayih called attention to Ethiopia's initiatives to ensure food self-sufficiency, including national food and nutrition, disaster prevention and preparedness strategies. Ethiopia had made a "maximum effort" to create peace and stability in the region by normalizing relations with Somalia.



UN Photo 174979/M Grant

GABON Ali Bongo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, said the UN was the centre for harmonizing the actions of nations to attain common ends. Although the degradation of the environment and drug abuse were confined so far to certain regions, "the spectre of this calamity haunts the rest of the world".

GAMBIA Foreign Minister Omar B. Sey said that the achievements made in resolving regional conflicts would be negated "so long as the threat of nuclear destruction continues to hang over our heads like the sword of Damocles". He called the practice of illegally dumping hazardous wastes in poor countries as serious a phenomenon as drug trafficking. Those involved were "traffickers in slow-motion death".

GHANA Foreign Minister Obed Asamoah said that hardships imposed by consciously maintaining

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economic inequalities emanating from colonialism threatened international peace and security. The 1990s should become "a decade of hope, of recovery from economic and social decline, of equitable international economic relations, and a decade in which development will regain its lost momentum".

GUINEA Foreign Minister Jean Traoré said that the preservation of peace and the struggle for progress required democratization in international relations. "After having been threatened for so long by antagonistic ideologies, chauvinism and passion, peace is now looming on the horizon, not as the light at sunset, but as the light of the sun rising inevitably towards the zenith."

GUINEA-BISSAU Foreign Minister Julio Semedo said that development problems should be analysed in terms of concrete measures to guarantee minimal living standards and progress for all, by stimulating growth and promoting beneficial interaction between the economies of the developed and developing countries. A new international development strategy should help in the economic rebirth of the third world countries.

KENYA Robert J. Ouko, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, said that environmental damage in affluent societies was a consequence of "excessive development and unrestrained demands for even larger goods and services resulting in huge quantities of waste". In developing countries, the struggle for food and energy caused accelerated destruction of forest, soil and water resources.

LESOTHO King Moshoeshoe II, referring to the "stark hardships of the intensified campaign for sanctions" against South Africa, pleaded for sympathetic appreciation of the "peculiarities of our position and the urgent need to cushion us and all other southern African neighbours" against them. African countries, determined to take charge of their own development destinies, needed appropriate back-up and support from their international partners in development.

LIBERIA Foreign Minister J. Rudolph Johnson said whatever its shortcomings and imperfections, the UN was the most appropriate instrument to attain durable peace and sustainable development in our world. The international community should accept the rule of law as the basis for both the settlement of disputes, and the conduct of international relations as a whole.

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA Jadullah Azuz Talhi, Secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison, wanted a review of the veto privilege in the UN, charging it had been "abused by some of the States that enjoy it". The flouting of the UN Charter and widening of areas of tension occurred because certain Powers insisted on giving policies of force, intimidation and terrorism the upper hand over co-operation, understanding and constructive dialogue.

UN Photo 174736/M. Grant

MADAGASCAR Foreign Minister Jean Bemananjara said that unless there was "equal and guaranteed security for all, we cannot speak about viable, durable, acceptable or sustainable development". At a time when the rule of consensus was largely accepted, the elimination of the understanding requiring unanimity among permanent members of the Security Council or extending it to all members should be considered.

MALAWI Referring to the traditional adage "If you want peace, prepare for war", Health Minister E.C.I. Bwanali said that security today demanded that that adage be changed to "If you want peace, prepare for peace". The causes of differences between nations had to be eliminated, as well as the tools of war that "tend to encourage nations to turn differences and tensions into armed conflict".

MALI N'Golo Traore, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, said: "The world cannot continue to spend many hundreds of billions of dollars on the arms race while a tiny fraction of that sum could help to eliminate poverty from our planet." Also, South Africa must yield to the fact that repression, however fierce, would not stifle a people's aspirations for freedom.

MAURITANIA Cheikh Sid'Ahmed Ould Baba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, said that

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stockpiling weapons, rather than guaranteeing security, gave rise to the arms race and fostered suspicion among States. There was a striking contrast between the millions of dollars allocated to the manufacture, improvement and stockpiling of weapons and the deprivation and abject poverty in which two thirds of the world's population lived.

MAURITIUS Sir Satcam Boolell, Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General, Minister of Justice and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigration, said that as long as the third world retained the role of "mere supplier" of raw materials at non-remunerative prices, its future would be bleak and poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy would continue into the next century. He also called drug trafficking and addiction, to which the problem of AIDS was intimately connected, the "new scourge of mankind".

MOROCCO Abdellatif Filali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, wanted the Mediterranean transformed into a zone of peace, security and co-operation, free from disputes and confrontations. Morocco continued to support UN and OAU efforts to implement the plan to solve what he called "the problem of the so-called Western Sahara".

MOZAMBIQUE Foreign Minister Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi said: "We visualize a South Africa with

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neither minorities nor majorities based on the colour of skin or on race, a South Africa based on political options, a society where criteria for taking part in the Government or in political and social life are not determined in racial terms but in terms of one's commitment to the ideal of building a just, democratic and non-racial society."

NIGER Mahamane Sani Bako, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, said that unequal development between North and South was the main contradiction in the world today. "Societies that are just surviving, societies that are overwhelmed: that is the harsh reality of developing countries, of which, sadly, Africa has the greatest number."

NIGERIA Foreign Minister I.O.S. Nwachukwu said: "No one is secure until all are secure in an increasingly interdependent global village." Africa once had been "strong and adventurous". Later it became the victim of actions to which the continent was not a party. "On the eve of the last decade of this century, we in Africa are determined not again to be marginalized in any area of human endeavour."

RWANDA Casimir Bizimungu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, said that a "stifled third world" would threaten the prosperity of the industrialized societies. The majority of wealthy countries seemed unwilling to act, even though "they see our societies inexorably trapped in a vicious circle of poverty and debt". The dangers posed by these inequities were "just as dangerous as the arms race or the deterioration of the environment".

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE Foreign Minister Carlos da Graca called terrorism "an irrational form of behaviour in a world that is marching towards the rationalization of its problems". Only arms reduction in a spirit of trust between States could safeguard peace. Namibia's independence day, he said, would be "a historic day for the entire continent. It will mark the end of the dreadful colonial era in Africa."

SENEGAL Foreign Minister Ibrahima Fall drew attention to the "harsh realities" of subsistence

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societies: populations with no hope, exposed to famine, poverty, natural disasters, desertification and locust infestations; economies devastated by interminable crisis; and exclusion of those economies from decision-making processes regarding the international economic situation.

SEYCHELLES Danielle de St. Jorre, Minister of Planning and Foreign Affairs, wanted an international tax on pollution to support ecological preservation programmes and to finance environmental protection programmes of developing countries. As two thirds of its archipelago were atolls which could be submerged if sea levels continued to rise, Seychelles could not be indifferent to climate changes.

SOMALIA Foreign Minister Abdulrahman Jama Barre said that the words "global interdependence" were no longer merely a fashionable term; they had become a key to the solution of many problems confronting our planet. Developing countries were prisoners of a system outside their control, and which had only contributed to deepening and complicating the development crisis.

SUDAN Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Sahloul hoped that the monies released by arms reduction would be diverted to economic and social development projects. He favoured a "forthright dialogue between the rich and the poor countries to the benefit of both".

SWAZILAND King Mswati III called the United Nations "the most important multilateral institution

UN Photo 175013/M. Grant

for resolving international conflicts" and "the best hope for mankind". He also asked for assistance to the people of Mozambique to ease the "alarming pattern of emigration, which is threatening to choke the countries playing reluctant host", including his own.

TOGO Yaovi Adodo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, said: "As long as there is a reverse flow of resources and as long as external financial flows do not increase substantially towards the poor countries of the third world, those countries will be doomed to stagnation and to impoverishment." Developing countries should receive remunerative prices for commodities to avoid further crippling indebtedness.

TUNISIA President Zine Abidine Ben Ali, speaking on 13 November, called for a UN treaty on peace and progress between countries of the North and those of the South, based on peaceful coexistence, justice, and the promotion of co-operation, in keeping with a renewed outlook and lofty principles of promising prospects for mankind.

UN Photo 175210/G Reed

Foreign Minister Abdelhamid Escheikh said all had welcomed the growing spirit of détente and concord in international relations and the positive steps made towards resolving various crises. "Yet, for all their worth, such achievements will remain fragile as long as fundamental and structural reforms are not introduced in world relations, which continue to be marked by imbalances and injustices detrimental to the least developed countries."

UGANDA P.K. Ssemogerere, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and Regional Affairs, said that the UN should be strengthened because of its critical role in managing "our interdependence and in fashioning the appropriate global response to our common problems". Global security could not be achieved without eradicating world-wide poverty, disease and injustice. The reality in many developing countries was one of "unmet basic needs".

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA Foreign Minister Benjamin Mkapa said the current economic system did not create a conducive economic climate for reconstruction of environmentally sound and sustainable economies of developing countries. The positive economic trends in the developed countries could not be sustained for long if developing country economies continued to experience negative trends.

ZAIRE President Mobutu Sese Seko proposed a plan for international solidarity in favour of African development—"a kind of African Marshall Plan". "Innovative international policies must be devised to reduce foreign debt, restore confidence among partners and strengthen co-operation for development." In the coming decade, African countries should pay all debts in local currency, freeing resources to help economic growth. The new resources thus freed would be devoted solely to attaining that goal with the co-operation of the competent international organs.

ZAMBIA Mavis Muyunda, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, called the UN and its specialized agencies "indispensable forums for negotiating a liberal, viable and durable system of international relations to govern sustained development for all the

UN Photo 175016/M Grant

people of the world". The trend of negative transfers of financial resources from developing to developed countries "translates into a dehumanizing life of poverty, malnutrition, infant mortality and moral degradation" for the third world.

ZIMBABWE Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira said that respect for the right of peoples to self-determination and independence was not only just, but "it is also good politics". The pursuit of a healthier world economy, of growth and development of the poorer countries and of fairer terms of trade between the North and the South "is fundamentally a struggle for human rights and for the right of people to a decent existence".

Asia and the Pacific

The quest for peace pacts . . .
Tempered optimism in '89

Cyprus President Vassiliou

The quest for final peace settlements for Kampuchea, Cyprus, and Iran and Iraq remained a high priority for Asia and the Pacific nations in the 1989 general debate. Many noted continuing obstacles to fully implementing the 1988 UN-brokered peace plan for Afghanistan. The tempered optimism expressed in the debate contrasted somewhat with a spirit of euphoria evident during the 1988 debate.

The intensely troubled region of the Middle East continued to be another major concern of most delegates. Many nations called attention to the lack of progress in the search for Palestinian self-determination. Violence in the occupied territories was deplored. Many speakers supported the goals of the *intifadah*—the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—and stressed the importance of the declaration of the state of Palestine in November 1988. Efforts to end the civil war in Lebanon were noted.

Lack of a breakthrough in talks on Kampuchea concerned many. Some regret was expressed that the Paris Conference had not formulated a comprehensive solution.

Talks on the unification of Korea were urged. Several speakers called for self-determination for New Caledonia. Mention was made of the situation relating to East Timor.

A new agenda

Asian nations named debt, the environment, drug abuse and trafficking, terrorism, protection of human rights, and refugees as likely high priority areas for the UN in the coming years.

The serious development crisis affecting the world's poorest nations, many speakers stated, was exacerbated by sluggish or negative growth rates, the lowest commodity prices in 50 years, and a less than desirable rate of official development assistance (ODA) from developed nations.

Delegations looked to 1990 to renew a dialogue on growing economic disparities between the developed and the developing world. In 1990, the UN is to convene a special General Assembly session on international economic co-operation and the Second Conference on Least Developed Countries, and adopt a strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

Speakers also called the scourge of drugs one of the most severe global social problems. The UN should be the central international authority to control this problem, many suggested, perhaps even taking a significant role in interdiction and law enforcement.

South Pacific nations were particularly concerned with environmental threats to the sea.

Despite the seeming intractability of many political conflicts, gloomy economic indicators and threatening social problems, delegates hoped that the UN would continue to be a major force in helping to create a better world.

From the debate . . .

AFGHANISTAN Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdul Wakil asked: "How many more Afghans have to go down the drain of a senseless fratricidal war for the planners and executors of the war to realize the futility of the military option?" How much more, he asked, must Afghanistan be destroyed before a military solution is abandoned in favour of a political one?

BAHRAIN Minister for Foreign Affairs Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa underlined the necessity of "preserving the vitality of the role of

UN Photo 174718/M. Grant

the United Nations". He said it was "impossible for any individual State, no matter how powerful or how great its potential, to isolate itself within its own boundaries and solve its problems alone and apart from the outside world".

BANGLADESH Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud outlined eight points for action to improve the global economic climate: an increase in concessionary financing to developing countries; reduction and restructuring of external debt; expansion of markets and trade liberalization; recognition of the link between trade, development and debt; increased scientific and technological development in developing countries; betterment of the conditions in least developed countries; ensured food security; and human resource development.

BHUTAN Minister for Foreign Affairs Dawa Tsering said that massive diversion of resources to weapon industries could not be condoned while poverty and deprivation "is writ large in the faces of two thirds of the world's population". It would be "a tragic irony of our civilization if progress and prosperity were to be measured in terms of the competitive superiority over arms race".

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM Minister for Foreign Affairs Prince Mohamed Bolkiah warned "testing each other's strength on the battlefield in order to arrive at a solution is a dire option which would have disastrous consequences". Peace is not merely the absence of war. Cessation of hostilities must be accompanied by a genuine desire to resolve disputes at the negotiating table.

CHINA Minister for Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen named regional conflicts, disarmament, the proper handling of State-to-State relations, and the establishment of new international political and economic orders as major questions confronting the world today. He also stated that the "turmoil" in Beijing in mid-year was aimed at "subverting his Government and overthrowing the socialist system stipulated in the Constitution of the People's Republic". It was, he said, "China's internal affair".

CYPRUS President George Vassiliou described the "new climate of confidence between the two super-Powers" as having "effectively reversed the post-war trend towards regional conflicts and proxy wars".

This has imposed "significant restraints on the outbreak of new hostilities and transferred many disputes from the battlefield to the negotiating table".

DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA Prime Minister Son Sann said that without a UN control and supervision mechanism, the "so-called withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia is merely a fraud and a manoeuvre intended to lull world public opinion and to obtain Western aid, which Viet Nam has been denied because of its occupation of Cambodia".

DEMOCRATIC YEMEN Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdul-Aziz Al-Dali warned that Israeli nuclear armaments and "the risk this poses to the region and its peoples" should not be ignored. His Government demanded that immediate measures be taken to end this "danger that runs counter to the desire of the peoples and States of the region to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the area".

FIJI Minister for Finance and Economic Planning Josevata Kamikamica, noting the almost total dependence of many Pacific island countries on the

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sea, warned that continued nuclear testing seriously threatened these resources. He was also concerned over "indiscriminate exploitation" of marine resources by driftnet fishing and effects of global warming.

INDIA Minister for Foreign Affairs Narasimha Rao expressed concern over the "new economic regionalism" which might lead to the "vivisection" of the world economic system. "Answers to our present-day complex economic problems do not lie in the narrow havens of regionally integrated markets but in a larger harbour of truly multilateral exchanges and interactions."

INDONESIA Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said that rapid advances in science and technology were drastically altering patterns of production, consumption and financial interchange. Yet they could have a negative impact on developing countries in terms of comparative advantage, terms of trade, and the international division of labour.

IRAN Minister for Foreign Affairs Ali Akbar Velayati said his nation was "earnest and serious" in its determination for peace with Iraq and for stability in the region. Iran wanted to expand bilateral relations with countries of the region on the basis of mutual respect for legitimate rights and interests.

IRAQ Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Tariq Aziz called for a return to direct negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General. Implementation of resolution 598 (1987) as "a comprehensive peace plan" would ensure "security, stability and good neighbourliness" between Iraq and Iran on a permanent basis, under UN auspices and with UN guarantees.

ISRAEL Minister for Foreign Affairs Moshe Arens said that Arab armies surrounding Israel maintained an inventory of modern weaponry larger than all the weaponry of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, valued at some $100 billion. "Why is this weaponry there, most of it directed against Israel?" He asked: "Are we aspiring to a needless luxury when we put forth the claim to secure and recognized boundaries? Are we wasting our resources when we maintain an army capable of defending ourselves? Are we imposing on the great nations of the world when we plead with them not to arm those of our neighbours that daily announce their hostility to Israel?"

UN Photo 174682/M. Grant

JAPAN Minister for Foreign Affairs Taro Nakayama launched an "International Co-operation Initiative" to foster world peace and prosperity. It would include increased involvement in efforts to establish and sustain world peace, an expansion of official development assistance to developing countries, and strengthening of international cultural exchanges.

UN Photo 174622/M Grant

Japan was developing an "activist foreign policy stance", determined to do everything in its power to create "an international community that is more just and responsive to human needs".

JORDAN Minister for Foreign Affairs Marwan Kasim said that by its "persistence and momentum", the *intifadah* had been successful in moving Palestinian political action into a position of initiative. Every nation, particularly those capable of exercising influence, should exert a genuine effort to make Israel comply with international law and accept a just and comprehensive peace settlement through a dialogue between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

KUWAIT Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said the 1990s presented "unprecedented opportunities for peace and development". It was "our destiny and responsibility" to seize opportunities now that had the potential to create "a new dawn in international relations, a dawn that derives its light from the triumph of reason and diplomacy over bigotry and force".

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Soubanh Srithirath called the situation in Cambodia "unclear", owing to attempts by some to "help Cambodian factions and by others to return the genocidal Pol Pot régime to power through so-called power-sharing". He lamented that the drug problem continued to be a source of world concern. While non-production of narcotics was important, he considered the effective response to the problem to be reduction and elimination of demand.

MALAYSIA Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba said the international community had to address the limitations of national Governments in dealing effectively with "assaults by the drug empire". The UN should be the central authority for determining the necessary international response in such areas as law enforcement and interdiction.

MALDIVES Minister for Foreign Affairs Fathulla Jameel declared: "Terrorism is not simply a minor irritant to anybody, least of all to the small nations whose sovereignty is not only held hostage but can be easily usurped." Today it might be small States whose sovereignty could be "robbed by a handful of mercenaries or a gang of bounty hunters". Tomorrow it could be the larger countries, which even now face some erosion of sovereignty and security by similar acts.

MONGOLIA Minister for Foreign Affairs Tserenpiiin Gombosuren said the acute problem of environmental degradation necessitated a treaty on the right to a better and healthy environment. Mongolia also favoured regional and subregional action programmes to protect the environment in Asia and the Pacific region and creation of a regional centre on the environment.

MYANMAR Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Ohn Gyaw said the threat of drug abuse, foremost among international social concerns, "rends the fabric of societies and ruins the lives of individuals, not the least among them being the youth of our nations". He called for a total attack on all aspects of the problem—from cultivation and transportation across international frontiers to consumption and drug-money laundering.

UN Photo 174900/M Grant

NEPAL Minister for Foreign Affairs Shailendra Kumar Upadhyay rejected the obsolete concept of

UN Photo 174833/M. Grant

"spheres of influence", with its corollary that the security of the bigger and stronger States was more important than that of weaker ones. He also called attention to environmental degradation of the Himalayan foothills where the effects of climate change and desertification were apparent.

OMAN Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yousuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah declared that Israel should "yield to logic" and enter into dialogue with representatives of the Palestinian people. An international conference would be "the most appropriate forum for such a dialogue. If Israel persists in rejecting the logic of peace, then the Middle East will constantly remain a cause of concern and a source of danger to international peace and security."

PAKISTAN Senior Minister Nusrat Bhutto described "a new era of democracy in Pakistan", achieved after a "long and arduous struggle, through a peaceful electoral process". Improving the environment was closely linked to eradicating poverty. Developed countries should provide technology and financial resources to developing countries to fight environmental degradation, while sustaining, if not accelerating, their economic growth. Pakistan abided by the concept of nuclear non-proliferation and expected the nuclear Powers to reciprocate by eliminating their own nuclear-weapon stocks.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA Minister for Foreign Affairs Michael T. Somare said small island States in the Pacific had to develop their national economies with limited financial and technical resources. At the same time, they must keep their region free of big-Power rivalry and their environment free of nuclear and other activities which could destroy the region's resources. He also called for hastening the process for bringing the Territory of New Caledonia to independence.

PHILIPPINES Secretary of Foreign Affairs Raul S. Manglapus declared: "Today a human being is born not only with original sin but also with original debt. To quantify it, the third world now owes $1.3 trillion to creditors, so every child in the world is indebted up to $1,000 at the moment of birth." He called for the establishment of an advisory commission on debt and development, which would be a "move of collaboration by debtor nations" in the "new openness which creditors have begun to display".

QATAR Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al-Attiyah named a threatened environment and spread of drug use as two major challenges to the international community which imperilled the achievements of human civilization. Although all nations should meet these challenges, industrialized countries bore a greater burden, commensurate with their financial and technological resources.

SAUDI ARABIA Samir S. Shihabi, Permanent Representative, lamented the "deadly

UN Photo 175016/M. Grant

scourge" of drug abuse, which destroyed citizens' characters, disintegrated social bonds and dissolved an individual's commitment to family, society and state.

SINGAPORE Minister for Foreign Affairs Wong Kan Seng said the key to unlocking the door to peace in regional conflicts was often in the hands of the parties directly involved. He also cited "a new generation of problems—drugs, the environment, refugees and debt—compelling urgent attention", issues that recognize no borders and, if left unattended, could threaten the long-term security of the international community.

SOLOMON ISLANDS Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Relations Sir Baddeley Devesi called the Treaty of Rarotonga, which declares the South Pacific region a nuclear-free zone, "an important disarmament measure". Also, he wanted genuine self-determination in New Caledonia, recalling that the South Pacific Forum in July 1989 had specified that the rights of the indigenous Kanaks and all New Caledonians should be safeguarded in a multiracial society.

SRI LANKA Minister for Foreign Affairs Ranjan Wijeratne favoured creation of a UN mechanism to support the independence of small States in the event their security was threatened. External support for dissident groups had aggravated the violence and insecurity of life in the north and east of his country, converting an essentially domestic conflict into one with international ramifications.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC Minister for Foreign Affairs Farouk Al-Shara said the "killing, destruction and homelessness" in Lebanon had been accompanied by "a most misleading mass media campaign". There was a "plot" aimed not only at

UN Photo 174811/M. Grant

Lebanon and the unity of its people and territory, but also at pressuring Syria "and all that Syria represents". The problem had been falsely portrayed as one between Syria and Lebanon, and not "as it really is, between a minority of Lebanese" and "the majority of Lebanese".

THAILAND Minister for Foreign Affairs Siddhi Savetsila said diplomatic efforts in and outside the UN were insufficient to restore peace and security to Kampuchea. Peace remained elusive. The UN had to be intimately involved in any peace plan for Kampuchea.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Rashid Abdullah Al-Nuaimi said the essence of the problem of Palestine lay in "an attempt to deprive a people of its land and to stamp out its national identity". No settlement plan would be viable unless it took into consideration the right of the Palestinian people to exercise national self-determination and to establish its own independent state in Palestine.

VANUATU Permanent Representative Robert F. Van Lierop asked why the people of the South Pacific must continue to see their environment violated by the testing of nuclear weapons. "For what conflict are these weapons necessary? Against whom have the peace-loving peoples of the Pacific sinned?"

VIET NAM Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Nguyen Dy Nien said the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia was an "important and fundamental" contribution to a peaceful settlement there. The "genocidal Pol Pot clique" had to be prevented from kindling civil war. "The nightmare of the killing fields" should never be repeated.

YEMEN Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdulkarim Al-Eryani supported total elimination of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States by the end of the century, banning nuclear-weapon tests and diverting these "tremendous expenditures" to economic and social development, particularly of third world countries.

UN Photo 175229/M. Grant

"No sooner had those countries freed themselves from the shackles of colonial domination than they fell victim to economic subservience as their resources became hostage to the debt problem."

Latin America and the Caribbean

Colombian President Barco Vargas

UN Photo 172711/M. Grant

A 'Marshall Plan' in reverse?

Massive debt, drug crisis expand

Will the massive $420 billion external debt destroy the resurgence of democracy in Latin America? Speakers from the region expressed deep concern that, if the problem goes unchecked, what President José Sarney of Brazil calls "a Marshall Plan in reverse"—$29 billion transferred abroad in 1988, mostly for draconian debt service payments—might crush democratization, as it has already crushed growth and many essential social services.

Renewed enthusiasm was expressed for regional and sub-regional economic integration, as speaker after speaker welcomed the continuing surge of democracy in Latin America.

While the economic, social and political impact of the debt load and the spectre of dire poverty continued to dominate the regional agenda, the growing threat posed by international drug lords came in a close second. Various anti-drug initiatives received wide support from other countries in the region.

Stopping the demand for drugs, illegal drug trafficking, arms sales to narco-terrorists, and drug money laundering were asked. Jamaica proposed setting up at the UN a specially trained, multilateral paramilitary anti-drug strike force and a central intelligence-gathering operation. Anti-narcotic agent training, public education, and drug rehabilitation and income substitution assistance to countries would complete the new international anti-drug capability. The creation of an international criminal court able to prosecute drug traffickers was proposed by Trinidad and Tobago.

Environmental protection, particularly of the Amazon, was also strongly supported, but it was stressed that ecological concerns should not be used to keep people in a state of poverty. The interrelationship between development and environment was a key issue in many speeches.

The search for a political solution to the turbulent Central American situation was considered a major political priority. The dialogue between the United Kingdom and Argentina regarding the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) was welcomed.

The need for a democratic solution to the Panamanian crisis was stressed by almost all speakers. A free election in Haiti, still beset by serious economic and social ills, was desired by a number of Caribbean speakers.

From the debate . . .

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA Permanent Representative Lionel Alexander Hurst supported the

UN Photo 175015/M. Grant

declaration of 1992 as the international year of indigenous people. Violence against indigenous peoples occurred most frequently when States or dominant groups "attempt to exert complete control over ethnic or tribal minorities". These people, who often lived in remote areas of their countries, had been pushed so far that "they are making a final stand against aggression".

ARGENTINA President Carlos Saúl Menem said that many Latin American countries were "faced with a situation of having to mortgage their development or demand of their people an extremely high, indeed immoral, social cost, in order to meet their foreign debt obligations". The UN must manage major world problems for the benefit of all and not just for a few, even though they might be the most powerful.

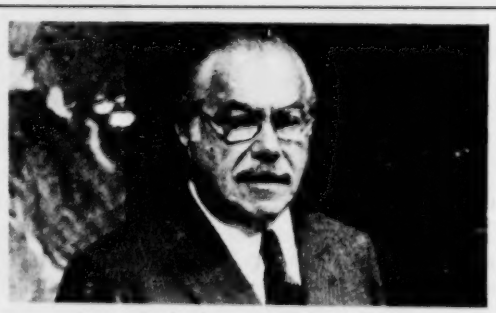
BAHAMAS Foreign Minister Edward Charles Carter called on the UN to set up a multilateral strike force against "narco-terrorism". The Bahamas offered to serve as venue for a hemispheric summit against drug traffic and abuse. "As victims of a collective geography that traps them between the drug-producer nations of the South and large consumer markets in the North, the Bahamas and its Caribbean neighbours have felt acutely the impact of the drug menace."

BARBADOS Foreign Minister Maurice A. King said that the scourge of AIDS, like drug abuse and illicit trafficking, respected no borders. "It is vital that in the fight against AIDS the international community deploy all the resources at its command." Developments in science and technology must be made available to all countries if the universal battle against AIDS is to be waged successfully. "The choice is clear: we unite or perish."

BELIZE Foreign Affairs Minister Said W. Musa said that third world societies were undergoing serious strains in the care of children and in guaranteeing women equal opportunities in education and employment. Belize supported public and private initiatives to promote human rights, particularly those of children and women. "Our ability as a people to provide the values and ideals that will guide the next generation will determine the course of social realities in the twenty-first century."

BOLIVIA President Jaime Paz Zamora was concerned over "the complex problem of alienation between society and state". Almost everywhere in the world, mistrust and a lack of belief were eroding "the very basis of any proper political system, in particular a democratic one". The General Assembly itself may be perceived as a concentration of power from which people feel distanced. This generates a feeling of despair.

BRAZIL President José Sarney said that the "greatest wave of democratization the world has known since the end of the war has swept through Latin America". But would the "democratic values that we have built" be capable of dealing with the problems of suffering that are "part of our everyday life"? Were the "democracies of the wealthy countries joining us in solidarity with our cause, or are they concerned only with their own well-being, relegating us to a marginal existence"?



UN Photo 174451/P. Sudhakaran

CHILE Foreign Affairs Minister Hernán Felipe Errázuriz Correa favoured promotion of effective Latin American integration. Present approaches based on

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restraints on foreign investment and regional markets strictly protected and regulated by the State should be modified to conform with prevailing trends towards privatization, elimination of customs barriers, a free market and the negotiation of general agreements to enable the region to "swim with the tide of progress".

COLOMBIA President Virgilio Barco Vargas declared that a new world war is being waged by an "insidious, global criminal network with enormous power and resources, a criminal enterprise that feeds on the illegal profits from the trafficking of drugs". While criminal cartel members had been born in many nations, many were called Colombian. "But while some may have been born in my country let me be clear: they are Colombian in name alone."

COSTA RICA President Oscar Arias Sánchez spoke of the continuing Central American peace process. He said the line between war and peace "is a treacherous and difficult path". Many were unsure whether to commit themselves to "the path of dialogue and reconciliation for fear of being called naive. It is easier to say that wars will always exist and wash one's hands of it, as did the great traitors in the history of humankind."

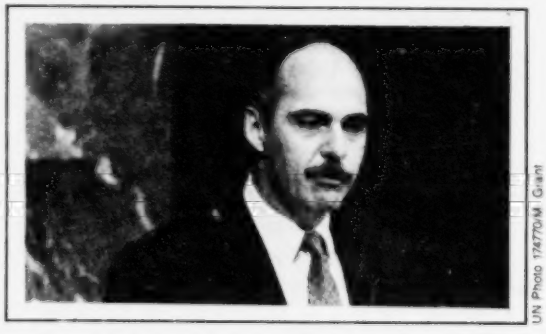
CUBA Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca Peoli said that the net transfer of resources from developing to industrialized countries had caused "a new form of economic colonialism". In recent years alone, Latin American countries had transferred $179 billion to their creditors, a sum representing 4 per cent of their annual gross domestic product, and exceeding by far Germany's forced external net transfer of resources after its defeat in the First World War.

DOMINICA Franklin A. M. Baron, Permanent Representative, said that the production and distribution of conventional weapons, increasingly sophisticated and destructive, continued to cause problems for regional stability. "The appetite for those weapons grows daily, especially in countries strapped for resources to provide the basic economic and social needs of their people."

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC Foreign Affairs Minister Joaquín Ricardo García wanted a strong, internationally co-ordinated plan to firmly combat terrorism, which was carried out "indiscriminately against mothers, innocent children and the ill—in other words, against life itself, the most precious thing we own".

ECUADOR Foreign Affairs Minister Diego Cordovez said that in some nations poverty had reached levels that had not been thought possible in Latin America. Forty per cent of the population of the region lived below the poverty line. "Poverty is the single main cause of death on our continent." The 1980s have been "the lost decade". Developing countries, particularly in Latin America, had seen during that decade their material, economic and social progress come to a halt.

EL SALVADOR President Alfredo Cristiani Burkard conveyed his Government's "hope for peace and concord in El Salvador as a contribution to the



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enormous international movement against violence, dogmatism and intolerance. The walls are tumbling—north, south, east and west. We see this as a final freeing of minds around the world—an intense hope for an age in which the force of the spirit will become, once again, the driving force of history."

GRENADA Ben Joseph Jones, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, said Caribbean nations had been taking stock to be better equipped to answer to the demands and expectations of our peoples in the decade ahead. "But our endogenous

efforts in the area, *inter alia*, of human resource development, housing and human settlement, health care, agriculture and industrial development cannot be essayed in a vacuum."

GUATEMALA President Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo expressed his country's "deepest concern at the deterioration of the environment". The international community should step up its efforts to protect the tropical jungles of Central America. International aid was needed for the "Mayan Trail", a large-scale project to preserve the tropical forest's flora and fauna, protect the indigenous communities of Mayan descent and encourage ecological tourism and sustained, non-destructive development.

GUYANA Foreign Minister Rashleigh E. Jackson said that at the UN "early preventive diplomacy should be more readily utilized, as it has distinct advantages over curative measures, which are often late, costly and less effective". At the beginning of "this decade of peace and international law" therefore, let us "resolve fully to explore the advantage of resolving conflicts by political and legal means rather than by the threat or use of force".

HAITI Foreign Affairs Minister Yvon Perrier said that despite the failure of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), he hoped that the 1990 special Assembly session on international economic co-operation and the Second UN Conference on LDCs "will provide the second wind the North-South dialogue so direly needs". External debts of the poorest countries should be written off or lightened.

HONDURAS Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos López Contreras said that his nation had had to provide temporary shelter for "the very large number of people immigrating irregularly because of violence in other countries in the area". Catastrophic effects could result from the enormous illegal immigration, accounting for 10 per cent of Honduras' entire population.

JAMAICA David Coore, Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Minister, said that the absence of an international capability to fight drugs could threaten an orderly democratic society in some countries. Other nations so threatened might feel compelled to invite, or powerless to resist, "a degree of involvement in their internal affairs by some other countries to

UN Photo 174800/M. Grant

which they are obliged to turn for assistance that will be inconsistent with their sovereignty".

MEXICO Foreign Affairs Minister Fernando Solana Morales said that four major themes for the UN in the 1990s are: reorganization of its structure and operation, including the distribution of authority between the Security Council and the General Assembly; greater involvement in the effort to create a more equitable international economic situation; commitment to deal with critical international problems—human rights, drugs, environment, women's rights—with a sense of shared responsibility; and reappraisal of the economic and social role of the State, in both North and South.

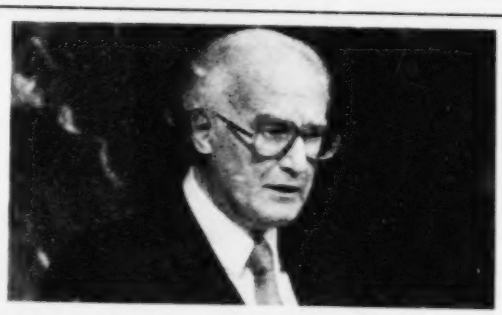
NICARAGUA Permanent Representative Alejandro Serrano Caldera said that Central America was still experiencing "the most serious crisis in its history", rooted in poverty, underdevelopment and exploitation. "The role of the region as a provider of raw materials in conditions of exploitation and destitution, as a banana plantation and a zone of strategic and geopolitical interest, determined its fate for many years."

PANAMA Provisional President Francisco A. Rodríguez said there were "few people so free of rancour, so committed to agreements based on sacrifices required by reciprocal concessions, as the Panamanian people". For those reasons, "we continue to set an example of peace in the midst of the desolation and violence which has, regrettably, marked the history of the American continent in the last decades".

PARAGUAY President Andrés Rodríguez said that his country was "headed irrevocably towards political democracy" and was now facing the challenges of social and cultural deprivation affecting the youthful majority of its population, 69 per cent of which were under the age of 30. Paraguay

suffered from a high level of illiteracy, was behind in the area of public health, and faced increasing unemployment. It needed international assistance to "leave behind the disturbing conditions we inherited from the political system displaced" on 3 February 1989.

PERU Foreign Affairs Minister Guillermo Larco Cox wanted a complete ban on dangerous nuclear tests because of the resulting ecological damage. Peru had



UN Photo 174504/P Sudhakaran

proposed substantial reductions of conventional armament expenditures, and had suspended important military purchases and promoted frequent contacts between military authorities as part of neighbourly relations.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS Permanent Representative William V. Herbert recalled that on 17 September 1989 his country had been struck by "a horrendous hurricane called Hugo that left a path of death, destruction, tragedy and homelessness in the eastern Caribbean". St. Kitts and Nevis had enjoyed a 5.8 per cent annual rate of economic growth over the past five years, but now suddenly faced "the stark reality that the hands of the clock had been turned back".

SAINT LUCIA Foreign Affairs Minister E. Neville Cenac underscored "the extreme physical vulnerability" of island developing nations such as his. "Always buffeted by the consequences of smallness, remoteness, lack of natural resources and heavy dependence on imports, we must annually undergo the dreadful ritual of keeping a wary eye on the horizon for hurricanes and cyclones which seek to blow away our small, hard-won economic gains."

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES Stuart Nanton, Parliamentary Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called for swift and workable solutions to preserve the environment for coming generations. The "population explosion of our time and over-exploitation of the natural resources of our planet due to poverty and rapid economic expansion" had resulted in environmental problems which put at risk the entire human race.

SURINAME Foreign Affairs Minister Edwin J. Sedoc stated that the activities of mercenaries continued to create "a devastating atmosphere in many developing countries". An adequate convention, "together with concerted international action directed towards combating the phenomenon of mercenaries", would have a tremendous impact on the "eradication of this evil".

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO Sahadeo Basdeo, Minister for External Affairs and International Trade, said that small States, "normally without significant political, economic and military influence, must endeavour by their conduct to be a moral force, to serve in some sense as the conscience of the international community". They could make a tangible contribution to the preservation of international peace and security when "acting in concert".

URUGUAY Foreign Affairs Minister Luis Barrios Tassano stated that underdevelopment remained the "major world problem faced by mankind". What was needed was "a revolutionary change in our ideas and policies with respect to international economics, ultimately leading to the formulation of a new development strategy". The environmental dimension should be an essential ingredient in the new strategy.

VENEZUELA President Carlos Andrés Pérez warned that with the debt crisis, what was at stake was the destiny of mankind. There was the danger of "a social explosion embracing over 1 billion human beings". Its consequences would be felt in the industrialized nations, "which look with unprecedented coldness upon the rapid deterioration of the situation". The debt crisis required the same long-range vision as was applied to Japan and Europe after the Second World War.

Western European and Other States

A new situation in Europe . . .

Peaceful co-operation, reconciliation

UN Photo 175198/S Lwin

Prime Minister Thatcher of the United Kingdom

A new situation in Europe, disarmament and environment protection, continuing concern over human rights and illicit drug trafficking were major themes in general debate speeches by members of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Most delegates were encouraged by the improved East-West political climate, progress towards settling regional conflicts and a resurgence of confidence in multilateralism. However, a few nations warned that this progress was still fragile and that further efforts were needed to consolidate such positive trends.

"Reconciliation" and "peaceful co-operation" were the watchwords of many. New approaches to international security were called for. It was stated that military might could no longer be relied upon as an exclusive means of ensuring security. Confrontation and competition at one another's expense had to be dropped.

Calls were made to strengthen the United Nations as a unique centre for global co-operation, particularly on issues relating to environment, development, human rights, illicit drugs and terrorism. Some countries proposed enhancing UN peace-making and peace-keeping capacities.

Most nations welcomed the ongoing political and economic reforms in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and pledged support for those changes. Calls were made for overcoming divisions in Europe and building a "common European house" based on freedom, democracy and co-operation.

The Concluding Document of the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was widely hailed as a political milestone. Wide support was voiced for co-operation among European nations on the basis of the so-called "mechanism of human dimension" of the CSCE, enhancement of

confidence- and security-building measures and reduction of conventional forces on the continent.

Several speakers, including Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer of New Zealand, devoted the better part of their statements to the ecological crisis. Many wanted concerted international action to prevent a worsening of environmental degradation, including stronger international agreements to protect the environment. The early conclusion of a convention on climate change was considered necessary. The 1992 UN conference on environment and development could be a forum for more work on effective strategies, many speakers stressed.

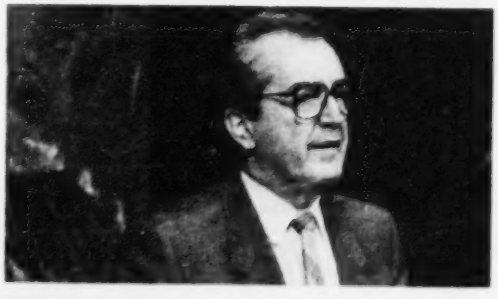
Grave concern was expressed over the growing debt burden in large parts of the world. Multilateral efforts were deemed necessary to foster debt relief measures, liberalized multilateral trade and better flows of development assistance.

Many speakers expressed concern over continued violations of human rights in various parts of the world. It was asserted that human rights had become a permanent and legitimate aspect of international relations and that no country could any longer claim that international concern regarding its human rights situation was an interference in internal affairs. Many favoured strengthening UN human rights monitoring mechanisms.

From the debate . . .

AUSTRALIA Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said that for peace-making to be effective, new efforts should be made to improve the flow of information to the UN Secretariat and the Security Council. The Council should hold periodic meetings at the foreign minister level, in closed sessions, to exchange information and views on developments which could escalate into conflict. A UN training centre for members of peace-keeping operations could be set up.

AUSTRIA Foreign Minister Alois Mock said international peace and security could not be achieved if internal peace in Member States was in jeopardy.



UN Photo 174502/P Sudhakaran

"Wherever basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are denied to the individual human being, peace is in danger." No State could any longer claim that international concern regarding its human rights situation was an interference in its internal affairs.

UN Photo 174579/M Grant

BELGIUM Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens said that equilibrium based on mutual deterrence had contributed to preventing a third world war. Now, peaceful co-operation was an infinitely more secure, more moral and less expensive basis on which to build peace than were relations expressed in terms of pure military strength.

CANADA Foreign Minister Joe Clark said: "In the past, we assumed the world could survive man's worst excesses. Now in an age of suitcase bombs, the AIDS pandemic and holes in the ozone layer, there is doubt about that elementary ability to survive. There is doubt, but not despair. . .Co-operation is now the new realism and pragmatism is the path to progress."

DENMARK Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen said the world of today was a better world than it was last year, and it was changing rapidly. New challenges seemed to emerge each day; old ones

acquired new dimensions. "Our planet should not be regarded as an inheritance from past generations, but rather as a treasure held in trust for future generations."

FINLAND Foreign Minister Pertti Paasio called insecurity and poverty the two main challenges before the international community. "Both produce fear and suffering. Neither can be dealt with by any single remedy." Only a reinvigorated UN could answer the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. "Let us unite our forces" to make the UN capable of meeting them.

FRANCE Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, on behalf of the European Economic Community (EEC), said that in relations between Eastern and Western Europe, "the deep wounds of history, once considered as incurable, are now beginning to heal". On both sides, a common language was "enabling us to talk to one another, negotiate and reach agreements that only a short time ago seemed beyond our grasp".

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said "the wheel of history will not be turned back". The inviolability of

UN Photo 174535/E. Debebe

borders was the basis of peaceful relations in Europe. The two German States were aware of their responsibility for peace in Europe, a responsibility that weighed more heavily than what divided them. "We can no longer afford confrontation and national egoism, as our extinction would be the penalty."

GREECE George Papoulias, Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that peace, justice and human dignity appeared to be assuming the dimensions of multilateral endeavours. The openness and restructuring defining current developments in Eastern and Central Europe constituted "a political event of historical dimensions". Greece was convinced that confidence could replace mistrust and that co-operation should replace confrontation.

ICELAND Foreign Minister Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson said that "in its greed and short-sightedness, the ruling species of this earth ...

UN Photo 174861/M. Grant

seems not only to be prepared to disregard the consequences of its behaviour on its own habitat, but to be actually engaged in total warfare against nature —even ready to destroy it completely". Without reducing poverty, and at the same time protecting the environment, "economic growth will be denied us in the future".

IRELAND Foreign Minister Gerard Collins said: "We cannot manage the welfare of this planet if we ignore the well-being of those of its people who are denied its fruits because of underdevelopment. We must move towards bridging the deep divide between rich and poor countries." He favoured greater UN involvement in election-monitoring. There might also be a role for the UN in the promotion of international standards for free and honest elections.

ITALY Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis said: "The new world is not just around the corner, but if we want to start building it today we must make the UN the chief instrument of global integration" as it is "an irreplaceable channel for mediation".

LUXEMBOURG Foreign Minister Jacques Poos said that for millions of inhabitants of developing countries, the 1980s had been a "lost decade". Poverty, hunger and deprivation killed 40,000 children every day. In Europe, old psychological and physical barriers had been torn down. Ideas, information and people were circulating freely. The European peoples were rediscovering each other and growing closer.

MALTA Prime Minister Edward Fenech Adami said there could be no true development without an

environment permitting mankind to live "a life of dignity and well-being". Malta's concept of the common management of extraterritorial spaces was based on the idea that the common heritage of mankind should not be considered as the property of, or as subject to, the sovereignty of anybody.

NETHERLANDS Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek called for a more systematic and efficient use of UN human rights monitoring mechanisms, such as the system of Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights. He also favoured technical and financial assistance to developing countries, so that they could adhere to a future world climate convention.

UN Photo 174591/M. Grant

NEW ZEALAND Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer said that degradation of the environment "threatens our security every bit as gravely as the arms race. We have been taking the good out of the air, the sea and the land and putting back waste and poison." In the end, all must contribute to solutions. The 1992 UN conference on environment and development would provide "an ideal chance to prove to all the doubters and denigrators of the UN the real worth of the Organization".

NORWAY Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland said: "We are facing a new era which will have to be shaped by responses to common challenges which unite mankind, rather than the conflicts which have divided nations in the past. Nations can no longer attain security through competition and at each other's expense. They have to seek co-operation in order to enhance their common security."

PORTUGAL Foreign Minister João de Deus Pinheiro said the true mainstays of peace and international security were equilibrium, stability and mutual confidence, as well as respect for the primacy of law and the rights and freedoms of individuals. Only a common global policy could effectively combat growing ecological deterioration. The disappearance of vast areas of the Amazon jungle was endangering the entire terrestrial ecological equilibrium.

SPAIN Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordoñez said that recognition by Member States of the "undeniable value of multilateralism" had broadened the Organization's scope for manoeuvre. The UN should establish a mechanism to identify and eradicate violations of human rights.

SWEDEN Foreign Minister Sten Andersson said Europe, the "classic focus of great-Power confrontation", had begun to move towards political dialogue, arms reduction and peaceful co-operation. He went on: "The roots of war and conflict are often to be found in unjust social and economic conditions. War and conflict prevent the solution of social and economic problems. Social and economic conditions must be improved everywhere on a sound, sustainable basis."

TURKEY Foreign Minister Mesut Yilmaz said that as the climate of East-West relations continued to improve, the momentum initiated by the United States and the Soviet Union towards the consolidation of that climate was universally welcomed. All countries had "an indisputable stake in the furtherance and expansion of this propitious atmosphere".

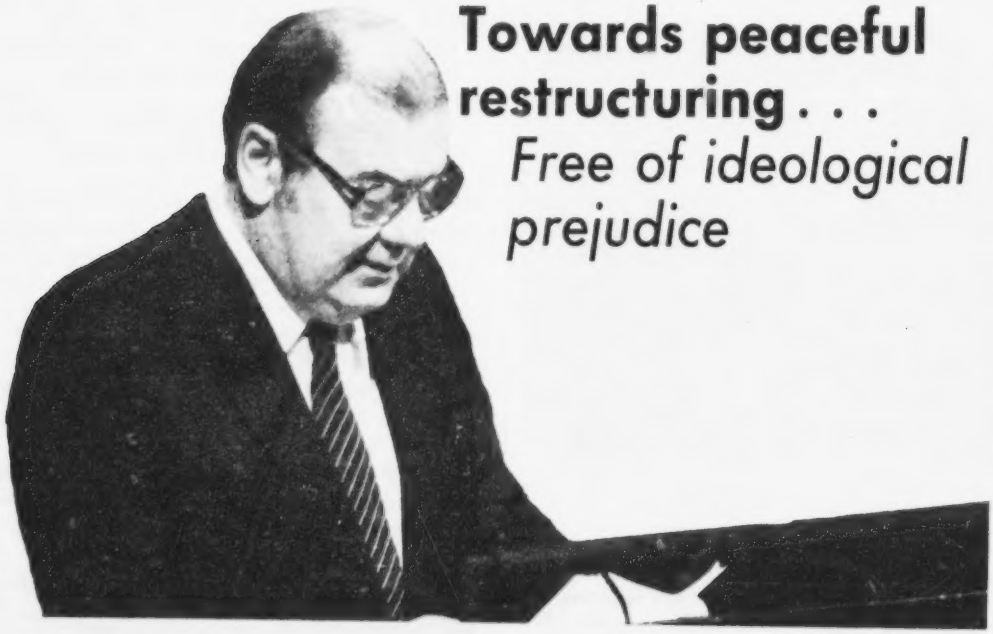
UNITED KINGDOM Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, speaking on 8 November, said that mankind was "changing the environment of our planet in damaging and dangerous ways". A strong framework for international action to protect the environment had to be constructed. The most pressing international task now was to negotiate a binding convention on climate change.

John Major, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, said: "The goal is a Europe of peace, prosperity and freedom, where the terms East and West have more to do with geography than with politics—a Europe without enforced divisions, whose people are at liberty to determine their own future."

UNITED STATES President George Bush said that although the United Nations was not perfect, not a panacea for the world's problems, it was a vital forum where the nations of the world sought to replace conflict with consensus, and it must remain a forum for peace. "Today, there is an idea at work around the globe, an idea of undeniable force—and that idea is freedom." For the first time, for millions around the world, "a new world of freedom is within reach".

Eastern European States

Towards peaceful restructuring . . . *Free of ideological prejudice*



UN Photo 174812/M. Grant

Foreign Minister Mladenov of Bulgaria

International security and co-operation, disarmament and European security were dominant themes in statements by representatives of the Eastern European States. Ways to enhance the role and efficiency of the UN, solve regional conflicts, protect the environment, overcome imbalances in the world economy and establish equitable economic relations among States were other pre-eminent concerns.

Most speakers said they were heartened by what they saw as a diminished threat of a nuclear war, the continued development of an East-West dialogue, a steady improvement in Soviet-United States relations and progress towards solution of various regional conflicts. However, a few speakers warned against complacency, citing the continuing arms race, persistence of several regional "hot spots" and aggravation of global problems.

"Détente is far from being universal as wars are still being waged in many parts of the world", noted Janez Drnovsek, President of the Presidency of Yugoslavia. "Political détente along East-West lines has not been followed by economic détente along North-South lines. The process of the pauperization of the South is continuing."

The need to consolidate positive changes in world politics and make them irreversible was stressed. Calls were made for peaceful restructuring of relations between States, for their democratization, demilitarization and humanization. Those renewed relations, speakers said, should be free of ideological prejudice and be based on the recognition of the supremacy of universal human values, the principle of freedom of choice and the primacy of international law.

Most speakers stressed the need to abandon old, stereotyped notions of security and to take non-traditional and non-confrontational approaches.

Many speakers felt that in a world of growing interdependence, where political, military, economic, environmental and humanitarian problems were closely interrelated, the international community could solve them only by acting jointly and in a comprehensive way.

There was general agreement that the UN could and should assume a more active role in the maintenance of international peace and security and the solution of regional conflicts and global problems. Wide support was given to activating the Organization's potential for preventing possible armed conflicts. A few speakers stressed the need to enhance the United Nations law-making capacity, to strengthen the role of international law and to bring national legislations and practices of States in line with their international obligations. Some speakers called for strengthening the role of the International Court of Justice.

Wide support was given to the continuation of the all-European Helsinki process, the development of dialogue and co-operation among European States and unification of efforts in building a "common European home".

There was a widespread call for strengthening global co-operation to protect and improve the environment. Czechoslovakia and the Ukrainian SSR proposed developing UN potential in monitoring, assessing and predicting threats to the environment and in providing relief assistance in case of environmental emergencies.

Calls were made for joint efforts to overcome the external debt crisis, to eliminate underdevelopment, to enhance international economic security and to establish equitable economic relations among States.

From the debate . . .

UN Photo 174761/M Grant

ALBANIA Foreign Minister Reis Malile said the present relaxation of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union was no guarantee that the threat of war had been eliminated. Today, interference in the internal affairs of others had increased "under various pretexts" and threatened to upset the balance, "with incalculable consequences". Peoples and States must be free to choose their own paths to sovereign development.

BULGARIA Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov said that in Europe, where the competition between the two military alliances had left the most substantial traces, "a new consciousness is now taking shape". The "common European home is already regarded as an attainable goal. . .The rule of force should give way to the rule of law in civilized legal processes in an atmosphere of peaceful and interdependent coexistence".

BYELORUSSIAN SSR Foreign Minister Anatoly Gurinovich said the ongoing fundamental changes in the world signified "the end of the cold war and the dawning of an era of peace and mutual trust". The UN itself must change in response to new challenges and difficulties. "It cannot serve merely as a repository of unrealized ideas. It should rather become a generator of new ideas and blaze the trail of change."

CZECHOSLOVAKIA Foreign Minister Jaromir Johanes said that in the present nuclear and space age it was necessary to build international relations on "deeply moral and ethical principles". Only common security would serve the interests of all.

UN Photo 174629/M Grant

Disarmament, development and the environment were becoming its organic components. "The position and place of man in society are increasingly becoming the central focus of world attention. The pan-Europe process has introduced a new notion—the human dimension—into international practice."

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer said: "Stable security for all

can grow only from a policy that takes account of the intertwining of military, political, economic and humanitarian factors and seeks further to push back military might in favour of shared political endeavours." The UN "brings together the collective spirit and will of nations and pools their efforts into a single stream", harmoniously combining national and international security interests.

HUNGARY Foreign Minister Gyula Horn said that as the bloc mentality receded into the background, there was a growing awareness of an all-European identity and a common interest in breaking down divisions that had persisted now for decades. "We are striving to ensure that walls—both symbolic and real—separating peoples be removed as soon as possible and that a common European home be built in which the free movement of individuals, ideas and goods. . .will be taken for granted and ensured by guarantees."

POLAND Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski said Poland had a "vision of peace and freedom" in

UN Photo 174503/P Sudhakaran

a region which had been too often one of conflict, division and domination. "If Poland is free and democratic, then its geopolitical and geostrategic importance could and should be turned into an asset that supports freedom." The changes taking place in Poland should be seen as an element of the disengagement of the super-Powers from their "long-standing confrontation in the heart of Europe".

ROMANIA Foreign Minister Ioan Totu proposed that the General Assembly adopt concrete measures concerning the observance by all States of the principles of peaceful coexistence among States with different social and political systems and the elimination of all forms of interference aimed at changing the social and political system of other countries. He also called for measures concerning the elimination in international economic relations of policies to privatize the public sector or impose free-market and other structural changes "proper to the capitalist economy".

UKRAINIAN SSR Foreign Minister Vladimir Kravets said a "new world order" was taking shape

UN Photo 174530/M Grant

based on the primacy of international law, and renunciation of confrontation and enmity in favour of confidence and good-neighbourliness. "We needed new thinking that would give us a view of the world not in the light of confrontation and a balance of forces, but in the light of a balance of interests." A State's participation in UN humanitarian activities and its rejection of double standards was a clear indication that it cared about people and was striving to preserve universal human values.

USSR Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said: "Freedom of choice continues to crown the hierarchy of a nation's supreme values. Every nation is free to choose the ways and means of its own development, but to do so in a responsible manner. It must not lock itself in the dark rooms of national selfishness." Freedom must not be sought at the expense of others. "We are more aware today than ever before that Soviet-United States relations cannot be built outside the global context, divorced from the problems common to all mankind."

YUGOSLAVIA Janez Drnovsek, President of the Presidency, said the world economy was hard to manage on the basis of agreements reached in a narrow circle. The more favourable international political climate, the greater awareness of interdependence and the years of relatively stable growth by developed countries "could indeed be fertile ground for a new beginning in the North-South dialogue and co-operation".

'A shining lesson in democracy'

Namibian elections declared 'free and fair'

→97 per cent voter turn-out 'impressive'
→72 seated in Constituent Assembly

UN Photo 157311 Milton Grant

The sight was impressive: hundreds of ordinary people standing in line, often for hours under a scorching sun, waiting to vote in a process that would bring Namibia its long-awaited independence. And Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar described the results as equally "impressive". He cited the 97 per cent turn-out and the orderly conduct of the elections as a sign of the political maturity of the Namibian people.

On 14 November, three days after the five-day polling period (7-11 November) ended, he reported that of 701,483 who registered, 670,879 had voted. Only 1.4 per cent of ballots had been rejected as invalid.

Namibia, the youngest democracy, "has given the whole world a shining lesson in democracy: exemplary as to commitment, restraint and tolerance", said Martti Ahtisaari, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Windhoek, on 14 November.

"In this election, there have been no losers—the whole people of Namibia have been victorious, united in their dedication to peace, reconciliation and the future", he added, declaring that the electoral process had "at each stage been free and fair", and that it had been conducted to his satisfaction as required by the settlement plan.

Voters elected 72 delegates, representing seven political parties, to a Constituent Assembly. Among them were 5 women and 9 from the Territory's white minority of about 100,000. The black majority numbers more than 800,000.

Subsequently, 21 March was set as the date for independence.

The remarkably peaceful elections, and subsequent ballot counting and tabulation, were overseen by 1,700 electoral supervisors and 1,203 police monitors, part of the 8,000-strong United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), which began its work in March 1989.

Mr. Ahtisaari hailed "the immensely conscientious attention given to each single ballot-paper by a most professional staff", both from UNTAG and the office of Namibia Administrator-General Louis A. Pienaar.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said he was confident that Assembly members would frame the new document with the same enthusiasm and patriotism displayed during the election process. "For Namibia must become a united nation where the inhabitants of all political persuasions will be able to enjoy their inalienable rights without fear or favour."

In New York on 20 November, the Security Council congratulated the people of Namibia and reaffirmed that the UN would continue to play an important role in supervising the transition to independence. And South Africa said that it was ready "to work constructively with the future government of Namibia".

Elections in Namibia have been held "in conformity with established UN standards of decolonization", the Special Committee on decolonization declared on 4 December.

A buoyant mood

The mood was buoyant and conciliatory in Windhoek's German colonial-style Tinten Palast—Ink Palace—on 21 November, as the Assembly met for the first time. Mr. Ahtisaari was there. The president of South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), Sam Nujoma, opened the session as leader of the largest political party represented in the Assembly.

UN Photo 157131/M Grant

Special Representative Ahtissari on 14 November in Windhoek, declaring the elections "free and fair". He said: "There have been no losers."

SWAPO secured 41 Assembly seats, winning 57.3 per cent of the votes cast. Under the broad UN independence plan for Namibia, a two-thirds majority—48 votes—is needed to adopt constitutional provisions.

The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) took 21 seats with 28.6 per cent of the vote. The remaining 10 seats went to the United Democratic Front (4), Action Christian National (3), and the Federal Convention of Namibia, Namibia National Front and National Patriotic Front (1 each).

Three other parties did not obtain enough votes to win seats: the Christian Democratic Action for Social Justice, Namibia National Democratic Party and SWAPO-Democrats.

By secret ballot, Assembly members elected SWAPO member Hage Geingob as Assembly Chairman. The Assembly then decided by acclamation that the constitution would be drafted on the basis of a set of principles endorsed by the Security Council calling for a multi-party democracy with an independent judiciary and a bill of fundamental human rights.

The text of the 1982 Principles concerning the Constituent Assembly and the Constitution for an Independent Namibia *(S/15287)* was formally communicated to the Assembly by Mr. Ahtisaari at the inaugural session. The Secretary-General's Special Representative was empowered to follow the work of the constituent body and make observations on its procedures and functioning.

The motion in favour of the 1982 Principles was presented by Theo-Ben Gurirab of SWAPO. During SWAPO's long years in exile, its leaders had called for a one-party state, but Mr. Nujoma told the press on 15 November that his organization would certainly "not impose its will on others, nor a one-party state against the wishes of the people".

He also sounded a note of racial reconciliation: "We offer a hand of friendship to the whites and invite them to stay and live with us in an independent Namibia", he said.

Riding the wave of conciliation, the Assembly dispatched in late December a first draft of the constitution to three independent legal specialists in South Africa, who will make sure that it conforms to international standards.

Last minute worries

Worries over whether fair elections could take place in a Namibia still run by a South African-appointed administration persisted among African countries in particular during the weeks leading to the elections. Much of the anxiety centred on the possible presence of former members of the Koevoet paramilitary unit within the South West Africa Police (SWAPOL).

Only eight days before the voting began, the Security Council on 31 October reiterated its demand for the complete disbandment of "all remaining paramilitary and ethnic forces and commando units, in particular the Koevoet and the South West Africa Territorial Force as well as the complete dismantling of their command structures, and other defence-related institutions".

By resolution 643 (1989), the Council also demanded the immediate repeal of "such remaining restrictive and discriminatory laws and regulations as inhibit the holding of free and fair elections and that no such new laws be introduced".

The Council endorsed the Secretary-General's view that Proclamation AG 8—the law under which the territory's system of ethnic administration was created—should be repealed.

Earlier that day in Windhoek, Administrator-General Pienaar had announced that the remaining ex-Koevoet members still serving in SWAPOL "had been fully demobilized". UNTAG confirmed the demobilization.

Conditions exist

Four days before elections—on 3 November—Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar told the Security Council that "conditions exist for the holding of free and fair elections in Namibia at this time".

Koevoet had been disbanded and its members demobilized, the Secretary-General stated *(S/20943)* in a report on 3 November. The "Bushmen battalions" had also been demobilized and the UN was making "new and long-term arrangements for their rehabilitation and self-sufficiency".

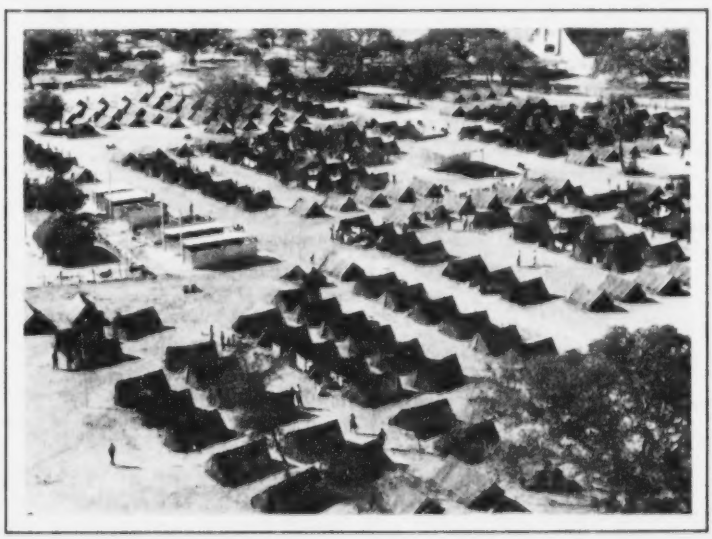
In the same report, the Secretary-General called "fraudulent" alleged UNTAG reports regarding an imminent invasion into Namibia from Angola by SWAPO. Security Council members on 3 November expressed "profound concern" over the incident and its potential implications for the elections. On 4 November, South Africa *(S/20947)* told the Secretary-General it had no evidence that UNTAG was responsible for these reports.

As for allegations that SWAPO was detaining Namibians in camps in Angola and Zambia, a mission sent by Mr. Ahtisaari to the area reported *(S/20883/Add.1)* on 11 October that it had found no detainees there. SWAPO also declared that it no longer held any detainees.

However, the mission said it could not account for 315 of the more than 1,100 individuals originally reported missing or detained. By the end of October, the status of 263 among them was still unknown.

"I assure you that for my part the search is not over. I will not disband this mission on detainees", Mr. Ahtisaari told the press on 11 October as he released the mission's report. Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar reiterated on 3 November that UNTAG considered this "an important humanitarian task" and would continue to try to clarify all outstanding cases.

While the past was still being sorted out in Namibia, its future was already dawning. By the end of December, the United Nations was speeding up plans to help Namibia's national reconstruction and development through the transition to independence and beyond. A new African nation was on the horizon.



UNHCR/19097/L. Ward

Namibian returnees in tent camps *(above)* await a brighter future.

Forging the world's youngest democracy

UN Photo

One of the most important tasks facing the people of Namibia is the formulation of a Constitution for what is to become the world's youngest democracy.

And a succinct text approved by the Security Council in 1982—the "Principles concerning the Constituent Assembly and the Constitution for an independent Namibia" *(S/15287)*—may provide major elements for that Constitution.

Originally proposed by the five Western countries that negotiated the 1978 Namibia independence plan—Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom, United States—the text was transmitted to the UN Secretary-General on 12 July 1982, after South Africa and SWAPO accepted it.

The Principles "constituted an integral part of the United Nations plan" and remained binding on the parties, the Secretary-General reiterated on 23 January 1989 *(S/20412)*. His position was backed by the Security Council in resolution 632 (1989).

The document specifies that the Namibian constitution should be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Constituent Asssembly and that a multi-party system should prevail.

The Constitution should reflect the following principles, among others:

- Namibia will be a unitary, sovereign and democratic State.
- The Constitution will be the supreme law of the State.
- The Constitution will determine the organization and powers of all levels of government with three branches:

—an elected executive branch which will be responsible to the legislative branch;

—a legislative branch to be elected by universal and equal suffrage which will be responsible for the passage of all laws; and

—an independent judicial branch which will be responsible for the interpretation of the Constitution and for ensuring its supremacy and the authority of the law.

- There will be a declaration of fundamental rights consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Freedom of movement, conscience, expression, speech and assembly, as well as a free press, will be among the rights guaranteed, along with freedom from racial, ethnic, religious or sexual discrimination.

A fair electoral system

The electoral system will be consistent with the following principles:

- Every adult Namibian will be eligible, without discrimination or fear of intimidation from any source, to vote, campaign and stand for election.
- Voting will be by secret ballot, with provisions made for those who cannot read or write.
- All aspects of the electoral process and procedures will be promptly decided upon so as to give all political parties and interested persons, without regard to their political views, a full and fair opportunity to organize and participate.
- Full freedom of speech, assembly, movement and press shall be guaranteed.
- The electoral system will seek to ensure fair representation in the Constituent Assembly to different political parties which gain substantial support in the election.

After independence

United Nations involvement in Namibia is not over yet. Until independence is attained, the Organization's transition team in Windhoek may have to deal with a daunting array of issues, ranging from the re-organization of the South West Africa Broadcasting Corporation to supervising possible recruitment of some 2,000 new SWAPOL members.

Aid programmes for the transition period have already been prepared by half a dozen UN organizations. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is taking steps to set up a new central bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has created an international trust fund to meet most urgent needs.

Courtesy of Hella K. Mills

Arrangements are being made to recruit Namibian teachers, doctors, veterinarians, airport personnel and other civilian staff to replace South African military personnel now performing those vital tasks. Any remaining gaps will be filled by internationally recruited personnel.

Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar announced on 3 November that a comprehensive UN economic programme for Namibia would be prepared in close co-operation with the competent local authorities, and an international appeal for aid launched.

Such aid will be needed to cover the government budget deficit resulting from the expected withdrawal of South Africa's subsidy. (In 1989, South Africa provided 18 per cent of the total Namibian government revenue.) Aid will also be needed to improve education, housing and other social infrastructure.

"While Namibia's economic infrastructure is relatively well developed, it has been biased towards a commercial sector which catered to the needs of the colonial administration", according to the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

That situation provoked "severe imbalances in the provision of social services for the underprivileged sectors of the population and of support services for rural areas", particularly in the northern regions of Ovamboland and Okavango where more than 40 per cent of Namibians live.

Overcoming the colonial legacy and ensuring equitable economic and social development will be the newly independent country's biggest task.

The ratio of white to black incomes is a staggering 25 to 1; almost 60 per cent of the land, especially the best farm land, is owned by whites, who are less than 10 per cent of Namibia's population; and more than 80 per cent of all Namibian wage-earners live below the $94-a-month subsistence level.

A UNICEF study, *Children on the Front Line*, found that 70 per cent of black Namibians are illiterate and up to half of all black children are malnourished.

It has been reported that industry is dominated by South African and transnational firms which export most of their profits and dividends, reinvesting very little.

But Namibia is rich in mineral deposits, with great potential for fisheries and livestock raising. The current climate of national conciliation and political goodwill may help. Already, De Beers, a South African firm which owns Consolidated Diamond Mines in Namibia, has annnounced plans to develop two more diamond deposits after independence.

Cuban withdrawal continues

Withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola is proceeding on schedule, acccording to military observer teams of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM). More than 9,500 Cubans left between 1 August and 31 October 1989, bringing the total withdrawal to more than 25,000. Also, by 1 November, all Cuban troops had been redeployed north of the adjusted 13th parallel.

"The issue that the General Assembly is addressing today has been an unremitting concern of the United Nations since its inception. Through all the twists and turns of international affairs over the last four decades, the point of principle involved . . . has remained absolutely clear. No ambiguity has lurked in, nor dissent caused by, the proposition that racial discrimination, entrenched in the system of *apartheid* . . . is totally impermissible."

Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar
12 December

A great achievement

Unanimous call for end to *apartheid* made at 16th special Assembly

The General Assembly, at the conclusion of its sixteenth special session (12-14 December), encouraged the people of South Africa, "as part of their legitimate struggle, to join together to negotiate an end to the *apartheid* system" and agree on steps to transform their country into a non-racial democracy.

"We support the position held by the majority of the people of South Africa that these objectives—and not the amendment or reform of the *apartheid* system—should be the goals of the negotiations," the Assembly stated.

In adopting by consensus a 10-paragraph "Declaration on *Apartheid* and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa", the Assembly also specified conditions for creating a climate for such negotiations, guidelines for the negotiation process, and a seven-step Programme of Action to promote international support.

"We are at one with the people of South Africa", the Assembly declared, "that the outcome of such a process should be a new constitutional order determined by them and based on the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

The Assembly also stated its belief that a "conjuncture of circumstances" existed, which if South Africa demonstrated its readiness for genuine and serious negotiations, and given the "long-standing preference" of the majority of South Africans for a political settlement, could create the possibility to end *apartheid* through negotiations.

More than 120 speakers participated in the three-day debate, including the Presidents of Zambia and Zimbabwe, representatives of the two South African liberation movements—the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC).

In opening the special session on 12 December, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said that the prospects of a negotiated solution were "far more hopeful" than ever before. Developments in southern Africa in 1989 had "provided grounds for guarded optimism that peaceful and fundamental change is now possible".

Following the adoption of the Declaration, Assembly President Joseph N. Garba hailed it as a "landmark" text in the struggle against *apartheid*, and said its unanimous adoption was "a great achievement".

A new constitutional order

In the Declaration, the Assembly set out nine important fundamental principles for the new constitutional order. These related to South Africa becoming a "united, non-racial and democratic State"; common and equal citizenship and nationality for all; universal suffrage by secret ballot; the right to join any political party, provided that it was not in furtherance of racism; enjoyment of universally recognized human rights and civil liberties, under an entrenched bill of rights; a legal system guaranteeing equality of all before the law; an independent and non-racial judiciary; an economic order to advance the well-being of all South Africans; a democratic South Africa respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.

"We believe that acceptance of these fundamental principles could constitute the basis for an internationally acceptable solution that will enable South Africa to take its rightful place as an equal partner among the world community of nations", the Assembly declared.

UN Photo 175310/G. Reed

UN Photo 175311

Two Presidents addressed the session—Mr. Kaunda of Zambia and Mr. Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Guidelines for negotiation

The guidelines for the negotiating process specify that the parties concerned should, in the context of the necessary climate, negotiate the future of their country and its people in an atmosphere, "by mutual agreement between the liberation movements and the South African régime", free from violence.

The guidelines call for agreement on the mechanism for drawing up a new constitution; on the role to be played by the international community; and on transitional arrangements and modalities for formulating the new constitution, and the transition to a democratic order, including holding of elections.

Among conditions for creating the necessary climate for negotiations are: releasing of all political prisoners, lifting bans and restrictions on organizations and individuals, removing troops from townships, ending the state of emergency, and ceasing political trials and executions.

Programme of Action

The Programme of Action calls for the international community to "remain seized of the issue of a political resolution of the South African question" and step up "all-round support for the opponents of *apartheid*".

It asks "concerted and effective measures" for applying pressure to end *apartheid*, including full observance by all countries of the mandatory arms embargo. Existing measures should not be relaxed "until there is clear evidence of profound and irreversible changes" in South Africa, it states.

All possible assistance will be rendered to the front-line and neighbouring States for rebuilding their economies, and support for peace initiatives in Angola and Mozambique will be encouraged.

Upon adoption of the new constitution, "the new South Africa" shall participate fully in relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations, the Declaration concludes.

Against *apartheid*

More than 80 speakers expressed their views at the traditional General Assembly debate on the policies of *apartheid* in South Africa, after which the Assembly adopted 12 resolutions on the subject on 22 November.

Among other things, the Assembly called for genuine negotiations to end *apartheid*, urged a mandatory oil embargo, and deplored rescheduling of South African debt and continued collaboration with South Africa in the military, nuclear intelligence and technology fields.

The unconditional release of all political prisoners, particularly children, was asked.

In other anti-*apartheid* texts adopted during the session, the Assembly called for commutation of the death sentence of an ANC member, asked for further ratification of anti-*apartheid* conventions, condemned the 29 September elections in South Africa, and urged continued aid to the front-line States.

Launching the

Filling out a form, understanding a prescription, obeying a traffic sign or helping children with homework can be anxiety-ridden experiences for over one quarter of the world's adult population—the estimated 965 million people over 15—who cannot read or write.

But there is hope now. Millions may soon be able to lead fuller lives thanks to a massive, United Nations-backed effort to reduce global illiteracy. The decade-

Possible Dream

UN Photo 153526/J Isaac

long campaign, spearheaded by the launching of International Literacy Year (ILY) in 1990 may well signal the beginning of the end of the long night of illiteracy throughout the world.

Good news accompanied the launching of the Year on 6 December 1989 at UN Headquarters in New York: for the first time, it was reported, the absolute number of illiterates in the world had begun to decline.

"The rate of illiteracy in the adult population has declined from an estimated 40 per cent in 1960 to 28 per cent in 1990", announced Federico Mayor, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the lead agency for UN anti-illiteracy efforts. He said that if this trend persists, "the number of adult illiterates will fall by 23 million between now and the end of the century". Due to a growing world population, this number had increased in past years.

UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who officially launched the Year, called illiteracy "a major concern" of the world Organization. For nearly 1 billion women and men—the illiterate adults of the world—"the right to education proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not yet a reality", he said.

What ILY is about

The aims of the Year are "to boost literacy efforts around the world and to put literacy high up on the development agenda," said Colin N. Power, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education. More than 80 national committees have been formed to carry out the work of ILY.

According to UNESCO, the Year's main objective is to set in motion a world-wide movement for literacy as part of a 10-year Plan of Action (1990-1999). Mr. Mayor explains: "The message of International Literacy Year, then, is that education matters and matters greatly. Literacy is the vehicle of education—the means through which ideas, information, knowledge and wisdom are expressed and exchanged."

The Plan of Action is based on regional programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Arab countries—areas which account for 98 per cent of the world's illiterates. These UNESCO-supported projects are especially concerned with women, who represent two thirds of the world's illiterate population, and with the least-developed countries which suffer from declining primary school enrolments.

Another ILY target is the millions of functionally illiterate adults in industrialized countries.

The strategy for the Year is "two-pronged": universal primary education for children to deter future illiteracy on one hand; and programmes for illiterate adults on the other.

China and India account for well over half of the world's illiterate population. In 1990, China will launch a major national literacy campaign designed to reach 80 million illiterates.

The Indian Government plans to spend $2 billion to help 80 million illiterate adults in the 15-35 age range become literate by 1995. The programme will focus on the rural areas, particularly upon women and those belonging to lower castes and tribes. Half of India's adults are estimated to be illiterate, of a total population of some 819 million.

A collective effort

UNESCO says "a network of partners" must be created if the Literacy Year is to fulfil its goals. "If universal literacy is going to be achieved, it requires an enormous collective enterprise involving governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as millions of communities and individuals around the world", Mr. Power said. A number of UN specialized agencies—the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme, the International Labour Organisation, the Universal Postal Union, and the World Health Organization—have devoted areas of their work to fighting illiteracy. The International Task Force on Literacy was initiated by the Canada-based International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in 1987 as an umbrella group for NGOs participating in the Year.

The ICAE President, Dame Ruth Nita Barrow, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations, said: "The freedom an illiterate person experiences on becoming literate is a unique one. There is a liberation of energy, creativity, and opportunity which gives a lasting boost to the human condition."

In May 1989, media organizations from all over the world met at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, to determine how they could best participate in the Year. One Japanese newspaper, *Yomiuri*, has launched a campaign to collect "a yen per illiterate" in Asia and the Pacific—a total of 666 million yen ($5 million)—to be directed to literacy projects in the region.

UNESCO as catalyst

Mr. Power described UNESCO's effort as "essentially that of catalyst, mediator and expert" in the fight against illiteracy.

Active in promoting literacy since 1946, UNESCO helps its 158 Member States formulate and implement literacy strategies. It also provides advisory and training services, and occasional support for pilot projects or experimental components within national programmes.

Each year on 8 September—International Literacy Day—UNESCO awards several literacy prizes. In 1989, they went to groups in Nigeria, Mauritania, Jamaica and Indonesia, whose work ranged from using traditional culture to creation of innovative literacy programmes to teaching prison inmates how to read and write.

The UNESCO Co-Action Programme carries out some 100 small grassroots level projects in developing countries. Co-Action repairs primary schools in Kenya, Mali, Nepal and Peru, equips literacy centres in Burkina Faso, Lebanon and Sierra Leone, and helps national organizations for the blind in 26 countries buy Braille equipment.

Since 1966, the organization's Special Account for World Literacy has raised almost $1 million. Recent projects include a training seminar for semi-literate women in China to enable their participation in income-generating activities; support to NGOs doing literacy work in the Congo, Senegal and Thailand; and promotion of library fellowship activities in Nicaragua and the United Republic of Tanzania.

"Education is essential to effective participation in modern societies, to being the subject of action, the actor, and not merely the audience, the receiver of action," said Mr. Mayor. "Education enables us to take our destiny into our own hands to fashion a better tomorrow. History, past and present, teaches us that those societies which have prized education and devoted themselves to its pursuit have flourished, whereas those who could not or did not, have paid dearly for their neglect."

UN Photo 153541/J. Isaac

Goals of Literacy Year

- **Action by Governments** to eliminate illiteracy and functional illiteracy, targeting in particular rural areas and urban slums, women and girls, and populations with special educational needs.
- **Public awareness** of illiteracy and ways to combat it.
- **Popular participation,** within and among countries, and **co-operation and solidarity** among Member States and with the UN system in the struggle against illiteracy.
- **Launching the Plan of Action** for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000.

Six campaigns

Literacy on the home front

Xu Weizhi is a fruit farmer at his home in China's Sichuan Province. In 1982, he was also one of China's almost 238 million illiterate people over the age of 12. Like Weizhi, 91 per cent of his country's illiterates live in rural communities; the other 9 per cent live in cities.

In China's anti-illiteracy drives and rural education programmes, more than 17 technical schools have been established to teach farmers to read and write, as well as strategic agricultural skills.

Weizhi attended one such school and applied the cultivation techniques he had learned for growing fruit. The new techniques not only improved Weizhi's peach harvest but also significantly increased his income.

Xu Weizhi's story is not an isolated one. Since the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, more than 153 million people have become literate. Massive anti-illiteracy efforts, combined with developments in education, reduced the illiteracy rate from 80 per cent in the 1950s to 34.5 per cent today.

Carrying its success into the 1990s, China will launch a new literacy campaign during International Literacy Year. It will be designed to reach 80 million illiterates and reduce the rate of illiteracy to about 10 per cent. Previous anti-illiteracy programmes have won UNESCO awards for outstanding achievement in eliminating illiteracy.

As in China, the driving force behind many government literacy efforts is prompted by revolution.

UN Photo/J Isaac

Political objectives of a new government often focus on mobilizing the masses for nation-building and development, the need for a national language to facilitate communications, and abolishing class feelings between rural and urban people.

Political change: A driving force

Mass literacy campaigns are one way to achieve such goals.

When the Government of Somalia took power in 1969, literacy became its number one objective.

In order to create a dialogue between the new Government and the people, first an official language had to be adopted. Traditionally, Arabic had been used in a religious and cultural context; state business was conducted in English and Italian. Somali was the language of daily conversation.

The Government decided that the unwritten Somali language should become the official tongue, choosing Latin script for the written version. Immediate action was taken to teach reading and writing in Somali to Somali citizens.

"I was not educated because I was a girl. This has been painful to me for all of my life. I don't want my daughters to be confined to the kitchen. So I will do everything possible for them to pursue their education."

—Ethiopian mother

Overcoming language differences

The United Republic of Tanzania is another example of a developing country trying to overcome the obstacle of the absence of a widely used single language. With 126 tribal dialects, Tanzania chose to use Swahili as the national language.

On the other hand, Ethiopia selected no less than 15 of its most used spoken languages for its literacy campaign. The Ethiopian effort was launched as a five-phase operation in 1979. Its initial goal: to reach 1.3 million people in urban and suburban areas.

The programme proved so popular that more than 10 million people were enrolled by the fourth phase. Four million succeeded in becoming literate, cutting Ethiopia's illiteracy rate from 93 per cent in 1974 to 44.8 per cent in 1983.

Economic problems: No longer an excuse

The double lesson from the Tanzanian campaign is that even the poorest of countries must eradicate illiteracy in order to achieve development and that they are capable of doing so. Illiteracy was lowered in Tanzania from 67 per cent in 1969 to 21 per cent by 1981.

Despite the paucity of resources, minimum infrastructure and a large nomadic population, Somalia's literacy campaign reached over 1 million (400,000 urban dwellers and 795,000 from the country) in just two years.

The qualitative results of the campaign are even more impressive. Taboos about food were removed, roads were built, new markets created. Health services for people and animals were improved.

"To pick up a pen in a public place and fill in a form is one of the most terrifying experiences for any person with a learning disability."

—Michael Marquet, New Zealand, recounting his long struggle to learn to read and write.

UNESCO Photo/A. Voronitzoff

Women take centre stage

Somalia has launched a new literacy project for International Literacy Year. Its goal is to reach between five- and six-thousand women in 83 villages. According to UNESCO statistics, the illiteracy rate among Somali women, at 94 per cent, is one of the highest in the world.

Courses in basic literacy, health, sanitation, nutrition and hygiene skills will be taught by 83 instructors. Classes will also focus on civic education, including advancing the status of women, their rights under the law and defence of such rights.

Women have also been the main target of a UNESCO project, co-ordinated with Thai education authorities, in Bangkok slum areas. A major problem of literacy programmes is convincing people of the importance of reading and writing, especially poor people mainly concerned with survival.

Classes focused on four areas: primary health, nutrition and housekeeping skills; development of suitable employment skills; training of women as teacher aides for pre-school children, and teaching of the arts to community children.

A slum "bank" was established for heavily indebted people paying high interest rates. The bank's credit now pays off these debts, while the banking experience helps reinforce literacy skills.

UN Photo 152390/J Isaac

Literacy in Jamaica: Portrait of progress

Illiteracy in Jamaica has dropped from 50 per cent to 18 per cent over the last 15 years, due largely to the efforts of JAMAL—the Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy.

Jamaica, like most developing countries in the 1980s, was caught between a bloated debt burden and the need for development. In 1983, austerity measures resulted in a 50 per cent cut in the literacy programme's budget; staff was slashed from 730 to its current level of 117.

Despite limited resources, JAMAL has succeeded in teaching 248,000 people to read and write. Established by the Government, the Movement provides training in literacy and basic job skills for non-literates. It ensures regular attendance in primary schools and provides follow-up material to prevent relapse into illiteracy.

The task was enormous. A 1970 evaluation, carried out in co-operation with UNESCO, showed that more than 40 per cent of the adult population was functionally illiterate. A 1978 survey revealed that more than half of all primary school graduates were illiterate.

JAMAL attacked the problem on every front, holding classes in private homes, churches, community halls and schools. It also established 16 adult education centres where part-time teachers helped learners in the 15-25 age group.

Government efforts were solidly backed by support from the private sector and the media. Companies provide funding, as well as facilities for literacy classes in the work place. The media rallied the cause with radio programmes, newspaper articles and a nationally televised quiz show which has served as a model for their literacy efforts.

There is still a long way to go to eradicate illiteracy in Jamaica, but, according to JAMAL President Lascelles Lewis, the turning point may have been reached.

"We believe that each one of the quarter million persons who has come into the light of literacy through the efforts of JAMAL represents one more solution to the global challenge", he concluded.

"I am tired of other people having to help me when I want to write letters to the hospital or the gas people."

—Laura, 63, a Polish woman who came to England before the Second World War

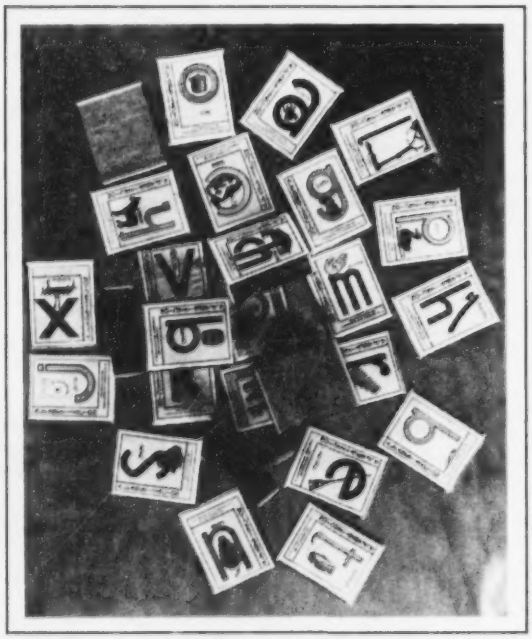
How is literacy taught?

I struggled through the alphabet as if it had been a bramble bush, getting considerably worried and scratched by every letter.

— Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

How is literacy achieved? What does a country do when it wants to launch a literacy campaign?

Both questions are crucial to the success of the International Literacy Year. The answer is that the methodology of literacy campaigns varies greatly from country to country. The commonality is that there are three phases to a literacy drive: pre-literacy, literacy, and post-literacy.



UNESCO Photo/R. Lesage

Symbols are important.

The stages

Pre-literacy: Examining what will motivate potential learners is a key element before the drive begins. The target population is studied and its needs analysed. For example, if the target group is rural women, the campaign must consider the aspects of their domestic life. Incentives to participate need to be incorporated into the process. Public information is essential.

Teaching of literacy: This stage is the actual implementation period. Learners are instructed according to a national or regional plan, usually within a specified time period.

Post-literacy: Essential for retention of newly-gained literacy skills. Reading materials should be provided to the now-literate population. People must be able to utilize their new skills. Local libraries should have useful materials, including those relating to wage-earners.

In the 'classroom'

Literacy is taught in numerous venues: an actual classroom, a field, a mosque or church, a private home, a community centre, or at work. Conditions and hours may vary greatly depending on target populations. For example, some literacy programmes include child care centres for training of women with children. In the United States, the 25-year-old Head Start programme now runs family literacy programmes in pre-school centres for some 450,000 children three to four years old and their parents.

The constituent parts of sentences and words are analysed in literacy classes with vocabulary often geared to the needs of target groups, for example, agriculture, industry and handicrafts, and home economics.

Word and sentence training in books is supplemented by posters and audio-visual materials, including television and radio. In the post-literacy phase, brochures and leaflets on specific subjects are distributed; films, slides and newspapers are provided.

In many countries, literacy must be taught in more than one language. The UNESCO Experimental World Literacy Programme (1967-1973) found that literacy is best taught to people in their mother tongue.

The next wave

Literacy training and primary education for hard-to-reach populations are likely to incorporate modern technologies such as the transistor radio, video-cassette recorders, television, and the personal computer.

Radio is one of the most cost-effective communication methods, particularly when no formal schools or teachers are available.

Closing the gender gap: Literacy for women and girls

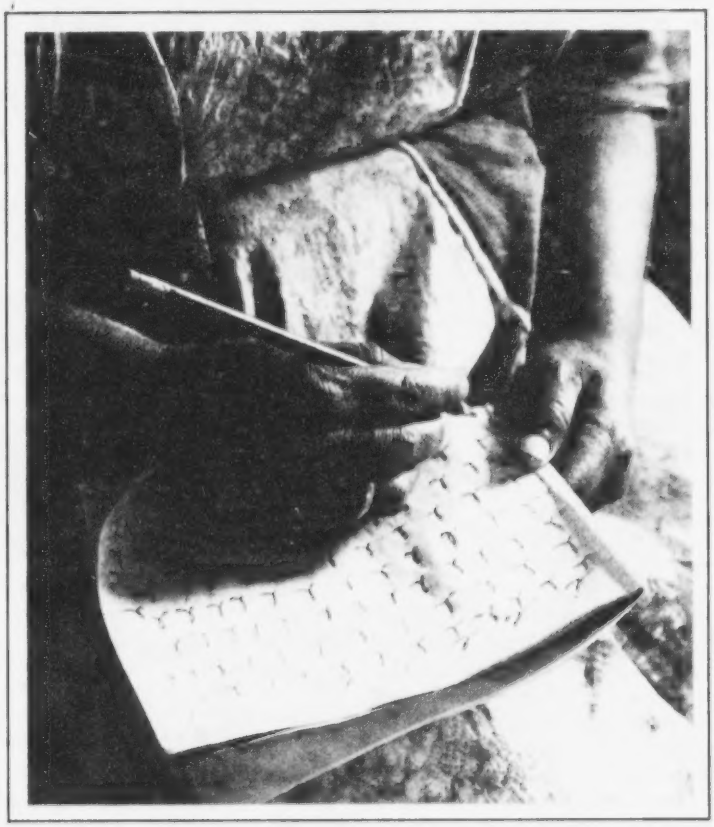
When you educate a mother, you educate a nation.

—proverb

Thirty-three-year-old Binta Badji felt an "urgent need" to learn to read and write after being unable to take notes or read class handouts during a three-day training course for village women on food processing. This motivated the Senegalese mother of two to join 60 other women in a literacy class. They were taught how to read and write in their native languages and to do simple arithmetic.

Sajjeda Begum is one of the few female administrators of a ration shop in the Dakshinpuri section of New Delhi. The 49-year-old mother of five, whose husband is unemployed due to ill health, was functionally illiterate until the age of 35 when she enrolled in a year-long literacy course which also taught her basic accounting. Not only was she able to obtain her present job, she and other newly-literate friends became social activists, lobbying for clean drinking water, sanitation, drainage, hygiene and garbage collection in their working-class suburb.

Binta and Sajjeda are literacy success stories. UNESCO estimates that some two thirds of the estimated 965 million adult illiterates—637 million—are female. UNESCO also says that nearly half of the women in developing countries do not know how to read or write. While one of every five men in the world is illiterate, as many as one third of all women cannot read and write. In some predominately rural countries, more than 90 per cent of women are illiterate.



UNESCO Photo/P. Almasy

UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor says lack of advancement in the education of women and girls is "the heart of the problem of illiteracy". He calls women "the mothers of a literate society".

Female illiteracy is expected to be one of the focal points of International Literacy Year. Governments will be asked to target illiterate and functionally illiterate women and girls in education programmes.

Women and development

Educated women are a vital component of development efforts, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In the report, *Safeguarding the Future*, UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Nafis Sadik—a female medical doctor from Pakistan—writes: "In every country studied, researchers have discovered a close connection between the level of mothers' education and the size of their families." Educated women are also "more likely to protect their children's health", she says, adding that "for every year of mothers' education, child mortality is reduced 7 to 9 per cent".

According to another UN report, females have higher rates of illiteracy than males in all of the developing regions: South Asia—73 per cent (46 per cent male); North and sub-Saharan Africa—69 and 63 per cent (42 per cent male); West Asia—61 per cent (37 per cent male). For the least developed group as a whole, female illiteracy is 73 per cent and male, 53 per cent.

Seven South Asian nations have named 1990 the Year of the Girl Child in an effort to promote education for females.

Kaisa Savolainen, who directs UNESCO special education programmes, warns that long-term development will not flourish "unless women are able to read, write, calculate and understand their environment better".

The World Commission on Environment and Development reported in its 1987 study, *Our Common Future*, that improvements in the education of all, "especially of women and in conjunction with other social changes that raise the status of women," can have a profound effect in bringing down population growth rates. Education can "enhance a society's ability to overcome poverty, increase incomes, improve health and nutrition, and reduce family size", the report also stated.

What holds women back?

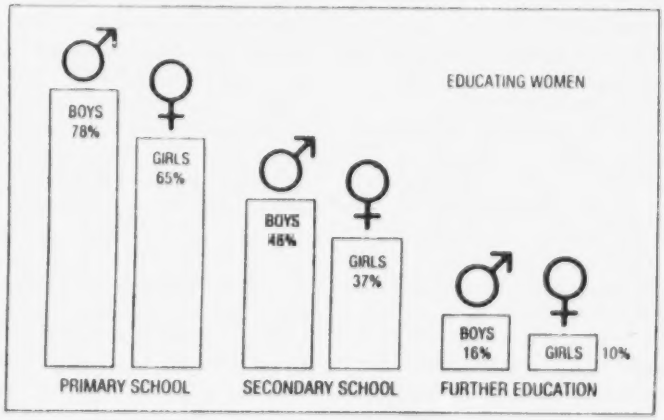
Women and girls in developing countries suffer not only from decreased spending on education due to economic constraints, but also from traditional attitudes about women's role in society, particularly in rural areas. UNESCO has said that "traditional sex division in society has excluded more girls than boys from learning how to read and write in school". Statistics indicate that of the 116 million children aged 6 to 11 years old unable to attend primary school in 1985, some two thirds were girls.

Many women in the developing world spend hours each day on domestic tasks, including working in a field and carrying water. Women who bear many children also have limited time for continuing education. Despite the success of one UNESCO literacy project aimed at rural women, problems have nevertheless arisen because of "possessive husbands, negative influences exerted by adversaries of female emancipation, as well as exhausting demands of being a wife and a mother". UNESCO has found that literacy programmes which include child-care services and intensive periods of instruction are especially successful with women.

Making a difference

In the remote regions of Nepal's mountainous Seti Zone, UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are carrying out a pilot "education for rural development" programme. Out-of-school girls learn how to read, write and practise good health habits. Teachers are female, giving confidence to families that shun mixed-sex schools for their daughters. The girls share tips on health and cleanliness with their families.

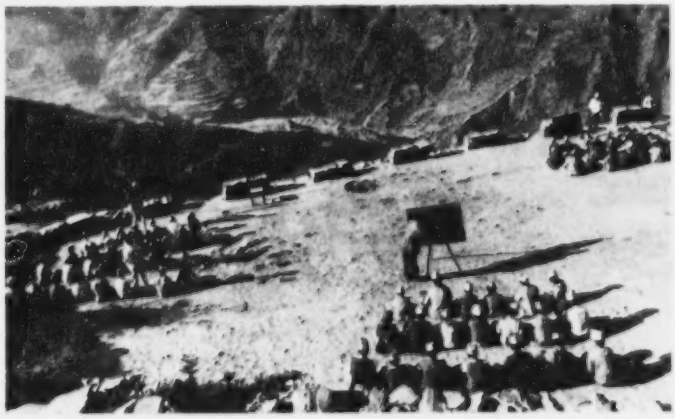
Burkina Faso's Ministry of Rural Affairs launched an intensive campaign in 1988 to teach 13,000 rural women to read and write. Instruction was carried out in 10 languages, with the Ministry providing boarding centres during four residential sessions of 12 days each. Weekly breaks were given so that participants could return to their families, enhancing the popularity of the programme.



Educating all

Everyone has the right to education.

—Article 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights



UNESCO Photo/G. Fernandez

Classes on a Nepal hillside.

A 10-year-old girl, one of five children, lives in a remote village in India. Her parents are agricultural workers. She would like to attend school but there are numerous hurdles: the school is miles away from her home, and there is a male teacher, so her parents do not allow her to attend.

This little girl is just 1 of an estimated 100 million children of primary-school age who are not enrolled in school and who are, in the words of UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor, "in danger of becoming the adult illiterates of the 21st century".

UNESCO targets for International Literacy Year include populations usually the first to suffer when government education budgets are cut: urban slum dwellers and street children, rural populations and those in need of special education such as migrant populations, refugees, youngsters with language, physical or mental handicaps, and immigrants. Children from chronically war-torn countries also suffer as schools are destroyed, depriving hundreds of thousands of primary education.

Education for all is one of social development's broadest goals, and is seemingly an achievable one. Yet, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that "after decades of educational expansion in the developing world, the goal of universal education has receded in the decade of the 1980s".

Mr. Mayor says that in many of the poorest countries, per-pupil expenditure on primary education has declined to a point which "severely threatens" its quality. "Debt, poverty and demographic growth hamper literacy efforts", he says.

UNICEF predicts that over 90 per cent of the developing world's children will start school. However, of the estimated 100 million six-year olds who will begin school in 1990, over 40 million will drop out before completing primary education. These children can expect to be illiterate for the rest of their lives, UNICEF concludes, unable to fully participate in or benefit from "the great changes which will surely surround their lives as the 21st century begins".

The brightest light

UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank will spotlight the need for basic education at a conference to be held from 5 to 9 March 1990 in Jomtien (Thai for "brightest light"), Thailand.

Some 1,500 participants—world leaders, governments, international and non-governmental organizations, and eminent educators—will have spent a year preparing for the conference through a series of regional strategy sessions.

The Conference is expected to adopt a "World Declaration on Education for All" and a "Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs". Planners would like to set the following goals for the year 2000: a common level of learning achievement through primary education for 80 per cent of all 14-year-old boys and girls, a halving of the 1990 adult illiteracy rate, and an achievement of parity between male and female literacy rates.

Illiteracy knows no borders

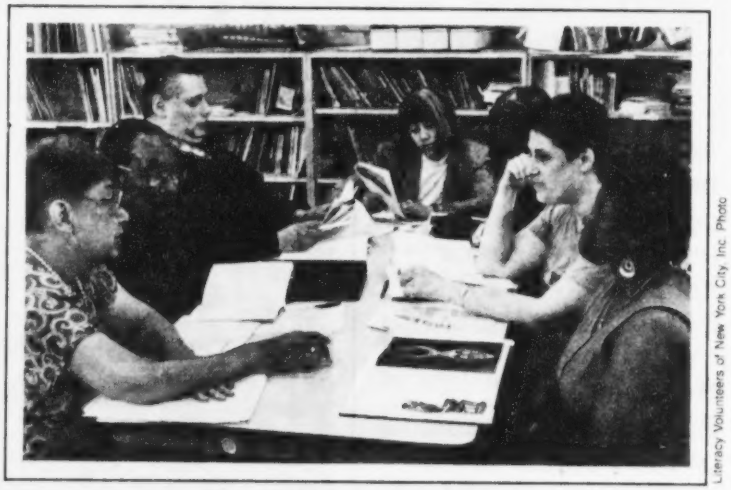
Education isn't expensive when you consider the alternative.

—Derek Bok, President, Harvard University

Not confined to developing nations, illiteracy is a global problem, crossing all borders.

"Functional illiterates" in the industrialized world, including Eastern Europe, number in the tens of millions. UNESCO says there is no simple definition of a functional illiterate: illiteracy in this context may mean anything from a "total inability to use the written word" to "an insufficient mastery of a set of sophisticated skills".

Figures vary on the extent of functional illiteracy. Of the United States population of 243.8 million, some 21 to 25 million cannot read or write. In Canada, a recent study estimates that 4.5 million of its 26 million citizens have inadequate literacy skills. In France, there are an estimated 2 to 8 million illiterates of a total population of 55.6 million.



Literacy Volunteers of New York City, Inc. Photo

New York City literacy class.

Why it happens

Functional illiteracy is attributed by UNESCO to the sizeable high school drop-out rate in some industrialized countries. The highest illiteracy rates are often seen among ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged populations. Although industrialized countries usually have universal primary education, many persons fall through the system's cracks, especially those who may speak minority languages at home or come from a cultural background outside of the mainstream.

Education budgets in industrialized countries have been hard hit in recent years, according to UNESCO, with cuts often affecting compensatory programmes and remedial tuition. Larger classes, scarce learning materials and low teacher morale may also result.

Until the 1970s, functional illiteracy was a hidden problem in the industrialized world. It was discovered as more and more job training programmes aimed at preparing young people for employment in emerging industries found a lack of basic skills in literacy and numeracy in trainees.

The Institute for Education in Hamburg, Federal Republic of Germany, is a UNESCO centre for the study of functional illiteracy in industrialized countries.

Breaking the pattern

In the United States, state governments play a key role in the fight against illiteracy. The United States Department of Education cites literacy initiatives in 45 out of 50 states. A fully literate adult population was one of the stated goals of the September 1989 "education summit" of President George Bush and the state governors. Media and business groups are often involved in statewide public awareness campaigns.

Canada is investing $110 million (Canadian) over a five-year period to combat illiteracy. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney called for a "national effort" by all sectors of Canadian society when he announced the initiative on International Literacy Day, 8 September 1988. Canada's Frontier College is one example of an innovative approach. Founded in 1899, it was the first educational institution in Canada to teach migrant workers to read and write, and more recently, to meet the needs of indigenous groups such as the Indians, Metis and Eskimo peoples.

'Valuable time passing'

Assembly reiterates call for Middle East peace conference

The General Assembly has called once again for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, reaffirming its conviction that the question of Palestine is the core of the conflict in the region.

UNRWA Photo/G. Nehmeh

The world body adopted seven resolutions on 4 and 6 December, after separate debates on the situation in the Middle East and on the question of Palestine. It wanted the conference held under UN auspices, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The Security Council was asked to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the conference for all States in the region.

On 16 November, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar reported (*A/44/731-S/20968*) that "sufficient agreement does not exist, either within the Security Council or among the parties to the conflict, to permit the convening" of that conference.

On 22 November, in another report (*A/44/737-S/20971*), he told the Assembly that "valuable time is passing" in the Middle East and the "willingness to negotiate that exists today may be eroded by bitterness resulting from events on the ground". He favoured a well co-ordinated international effort to help the parties enter into an effective negotiating process towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar also said he was greatly anguished by developments in Lebanon, and reaffirmed UN support for efforts to restore Lebanon's unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Peace is indivisible

In its resolutions, the Assembly declared that peace in the region was indivisible and must be based on a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Middle East problem. Such a solution, it stated, would ensure the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and the other

occupied Arab territories, and would enable the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, to exercise its inalienable rights, including the establishment of its independent sovereign state in Palestine.

States were called upon to end the flow to Israel of any military, economic, financial and technological aid.

Israel voted against all seven resolutions. The United States opposed six, abstaining on a text calling invalid and illegal Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem.

In other action, the Assembly declared that Israel's continued occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan Heights and its decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on it constituted an act of aggression. It asked for a suspension of any military or other assistance to Israel.

The Assembly also asked the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to implement the Programme of Action for Achievement of Palestinian Rights, adopted at the 1983 International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

On 6 December, after sponsors agreed not to insist on a vote, the Assembly deferred consideration of a draft text recommending that the status of Palestine be changed, in the UN, from that of an observer organization to that of an observer state. By the draft, the Assembly would have decided that the "designation Palestine shall be construed, within the United Nations, as the State of Palestine, without prejudice to the acquired rights of the Palestine Liberation Organizaton in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and practice". In 1988, the General Assembly had acknowledged the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council and had decided the UN should refer to the PLO, which has observer status, as "Palestine" in future.

Blanchard appointed Special Adviser for occupied territories

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has appointed Francis Blanchard—former Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)—as his Special Adviser on economic development in the occupied Palestinian territories. He will co-ordinate assistance from UN bodies to Palestinians and work with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Mandate of Golan Force extended

On 29 November, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for a six-month period until 31 May 1990. The Council acted unanimously in adopting resolution 645 (1989). The Force was created in 1974 to maintain the cease-fire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic in the Golan Heights area. The 1,334-member Force draws troops from Austria, Canada, Finland and Poland.

UNDOF Photo

Palestinian rights

On 6 October, the Assembly condemned what it termed Israeli "persistent policies and practices" violating the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories. The vote was 140 to 2 against (Israel, United States), with 6 abstentions.

In resolution 44/2, entitled "the uprising *(intifadah)* of the Palestinian people", the Assembly reaffirmed that Israel's occupation of those territories in no way changed their legal status. The world body demanded that Israel abide by the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Security Council was asked to urgently consider the situation in the occupied territories "with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection to Palestinian civilians".

Israel called the "ritualistic" resolution a "flagrant exercise in public relations", making peace more distant. It said international law placed on Israel alone the responsibility to maintain public order and safety in the "administered territories".

The United States said the text presented a one-sided view of the difficult situation in the occupied territories, "without regard to the complex political and security environment in the area".

More action

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People reported (*A/44/35*) that the growing deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories imposed a moral duty on the UN and the international community to bring about a settlement and ensure the safety of the Palestinian people under occupation.

On 8 December, the Assembly adopted seven more resolutions based on the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

Among other things, it called for return of all displaced Arab and Palestinian inhabitants to their homes; condemned actions against students and faculties; and deplored Israel's detention of thousands of Palestinians. It also demanded a stop to deportations of Palestinians from the territories and changes in the legal status, geographical nature or demographic composition of those territories.

UN Photo 174916/J. Isaac

The Secretary-General *(right)* and Chedli Klibi, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, in October signed an agreement on co-operation between the UN and the League.

Text on Palestinian rights vetoed in Security Council

A draft resolution strongly deploring Israeli policies and practices "which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory" was vetoed on 7 November in the Security Council by the United States. The other 14 members of the Council voted in favour. The text cited in particular the "siege of towns, the ransacking of the homes of inhabitants, as has happened at Beit Sahur, and the illegal and arbitrary confiscation of their property and valuables".

The draft was sponsored by Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia. Twenty-one speakers participated in debate during three meetings held on 6 and 7 November.

By the draft, the Council would have also called upon Israel to "desist from committing such practices and actions and lift its siege", and urged that Israel return the "illegally and arbitrarily confiscated property to its owners".

The Council would have also reaffirmed that the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War was applicable to the "Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem". Israel would have been called upon to abide "immediately and scrupulously" by that Convention, and to desist forthwith from those policies and practices which were in violation of its provisions.

All High Contracting Parties to the Convention would have been called upon to ensure respect for it, "including the obligation of the occupying Power . . . to treat the population of the occupied territory humanely at all times and in all circumstances".

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar would have been asked to report on the situation through on-site monitoring.

UN Photo 175188/J Isaac

The United States voted "no".

'Unbalanced', says Mr. Pickering

Explaining the negative vote, Thomas Pickering of the United States called the text "unbalanced", as it criticized Israeli actions without referring to acts of violence directed by Palestinians against Israelis or by Palestinians against other Palestinians.

Johanan Bein of Israel said that the rate of PLO attacks against Palestinians had increased sharply following the promulgation in April 1989 of what he termed Israel's "peace initiative"—the "only realistic, viable and practical endeavour towards a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict".

Zuhdi Labib Terzi, Observer of Palestine, said it was distressing to see that the Council's overwhelming concern regarding the situation had been "undermined" by a permanent member, preventing the Secretary-General from convening a Council meeting to start a "comprehensive peace process".

Action on Palestinian refugees

On 8 December, the General Assembly extended until 30 June 1993 the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The 40-year-old agency was established on 8 December 1949. Governments were asked to make "generous efforts" to meet the anticipated UNRWA needs.

A 1990 General Fund budget of $208.3 million—an increase of $11.3 million—is expected. Pledges totalling nearly $76 million for 1990 were made on 16 November at a special meeting.

In all, the General Assembly adopted 11 resolutions on 8 December concerning Palestine refugees, including a call for guarantee of their legal and human rights, resettlement and housing, compensation for lost property, education, financing of UNRWA, and restoring the general ration.

Larger role for UN in Central America urged

Presidents ask for demobilization of irregular forces

UN Photo 175204/J. Isaac

The International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV) met in New York and Washington, D.C., in November.

The United Nations has been asked to play a larger role in the Central America peace process. The request was made by the region's five Presidents at a summit meeting in San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica (10-12 December).

The Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua want the mandate of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) expanded to give it direct responsibility for demobilizing irregular forces in the region.

They also want ONUCA to prevent the supply of weapons both to the Nicaraguan resistance and to the Frente Farabundo Martí por la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador, and to verify any cease-fires.

ONUCA was established by the Security Council on 7 November 1989, strictly as an observer mission. Its mandate: to verify the

Nicaraguan election process begins

The election campaign in Nicaragua began on 4 December, following two months of voter registration. The UN Observation Mission for the Verification of Elections in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) by the beginning of December had opened offices in virtually all parts of the country.

Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar reported that in spite of the interruption of the cease-fire, the process was proceeding "in a generally positive way". He hoped that outbreaks of violence were "isolated incidents" and that the campaign would develop peacefully.

Elliott L. Richardson, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for the verification of elections in Nicaragua, visited the country from 18 to 23 October. On his return to New York, he reported that the registration period had not been disrupted in any major way. The goal of a free, fair and honest election was being taken very seriously by all those concerned in the Government, the parties and the people, he stated.

The Mission reported on its activities on 17 October *(A/44/642)* and 7 December *(A/44/834)*, stating that a Nicaraguan electoral authority had been established and political parties organized. It also described the voter registration process, use of mass media in the campaign and complaints and allegations received. A total of 74 international observers were in place by the beginning of December.

cessation of aid to irregular forces and the non-use of the territory of one State for attacks on other States. Any change in that mandate must be approved by the Council.

In a Declaration *(A/44/872-S/21019)* adopted at the end of their three-day summit, the Presidents also asked UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to speed up full deployment and functioning of ONUCA, take steps to reinitiate the dialogue between the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN, and involve States with interests in the region more directly in the peace efforts.

The International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV) was asked "to proceed at once" with the demobilization of the FMLN. All funds for the Nicaraguan resistance, the Declaration stated, should be immediately turned over to CIAV. The Commission was jointly established on 6 September 1989 by the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS).

"Initiation of the demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance and the FMLN is a key factor in overcoming the crisis besetting the peace process", the Presidents stated.

The Nicaraguan Government should make at once "the necessary contacts with ONUCA and CIAV so that the demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance forces in Honduras may begin as of the signing of this agreement", they added.

The Presidents strongly supported El Salvador President Alfredo Cristiani in his efforts to find a peaceful and democratic solution to the conflict in his country.

They reiterated their appeal to the FMLN to cease hostilities, resume the dialogue with the Government and "publicly renounce any type of violent action that may directly or indirectly affect the civilian population".

They also appealed to the Nicaraguan resistance "to cease any action which may jeopardize the electoral process and the civilian population". Elections in Nicaragua have been scheduled for February 1990.

Presidents Cristiani of El Salvador and Daniel Ortega Saavedra of Nicaragua were urged to end through negotiations and dialogue, "the estrangement between their Governments".

The General Assembly on 23 October expressed *(44/10)* its strongest support for the peace process in Central America and fully supported the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard.

The Assembly also reviewed the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America adopted by the General Assembly in 1987 *(42/204)*.

The Secretary-General reported *(A/44/519)* that already under the Plan, 21 development projects, costing some $11.2 million, had been approved, with $12.4 million available for technical assistance projects.

In his last report of the year on Central America *(A/44/886-S/21029)*, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar said on 21 December that he hoped that the cycle of great expectations and deep disappointments that had characterized the peace process in the region would finally be broken.

"I hope that the decisions adopted by the Central American Presidents will definitely guide the process along the right lines", he said. He was "taking the necessary steps" to carry out the tasks requested from the UN, which he felt were an indication of confidence in the Organization.

Renewed violence

The Declaration of San Isidro de Coronado came after the peace process was shaken by renewed violence in Nicaragua and El Salvador in November and December. Both Governments exchanged charges before the Security Council.

On 1 November, Nicaragua unilaterally suspended the cease-fire in place since March 1988, after

ONUCA established, first observers in place

The Security Council on 7 November decided to establish the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) for an initial period of six months. It did so in unanimously adopting resolution 644 (1989). The Group's total strength is expected to reach 675, including 260 military observers, naval and air support personnel, medical staff and administrative staff.

The Secretary-General reported *(S/20895)* that ONUCA would "by its very presence perform a preventive function and, as appropriate, a deterrent function".

The Group's headquarters will be in Tegucigalpa, with liaison offices in other Central American capitals. Verification centres are to be set up in 33 locations as close as possible to sensitive areas throughout the region. Because of the long distances involved, and few roads and rugged terrain, observers will work in mobile teams, using heavy road vehicles, boats and helicopters.

The unarmed observers will come from Canada, Colombia, Ireland, Spain and Venezuela; logistics units from Canada and Venezuela; and civilian elements from the Federal Republic of Germany. Major-General Agustín Quesada Gómez of Spain was named Chief Military Observer. By the end of December, 25 observers from Colombia, Ireland and Venezuela had arrived in Honduras.

denouncing what it described as attacks and massive border infiltrations by Nicaraguan resistance forces.

Efforts to restore the cease-fire were made at a series of meetings held under CIAV auspices in New York and Washington, D.C., in November.

Attending were representatives of the Nicaraguan Government and of the Nicaraguan resistance, a representative of Honduras as an observer, and Nicaraguan Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo as a witness.

Although there had been "a narrowing of the gap" between the positions at the meetings, differences were "still outstanding", the CIAV stated in a communiqué at the closing meeting. New meetings were to be convened "at the earliest date".

Civilian population suffers

Meanwhile, fighting between government and FMLN forces intensified in El Salvador. Security Council members reacted with "grave concern", particularly to the "numerous acts of violence resulting in loss of lives and sufferings of the civilian population". They reaffirmed support for the Secretary-General's peace efforts in two statements, on 24 November and 8 December *(S/21011)*.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar stated on 13 November that the situation in El Salvador had "seriously deteriorated" and talks between the Government and the FMLN in which a UN representative had been involved "seemed to be in jeopardy".

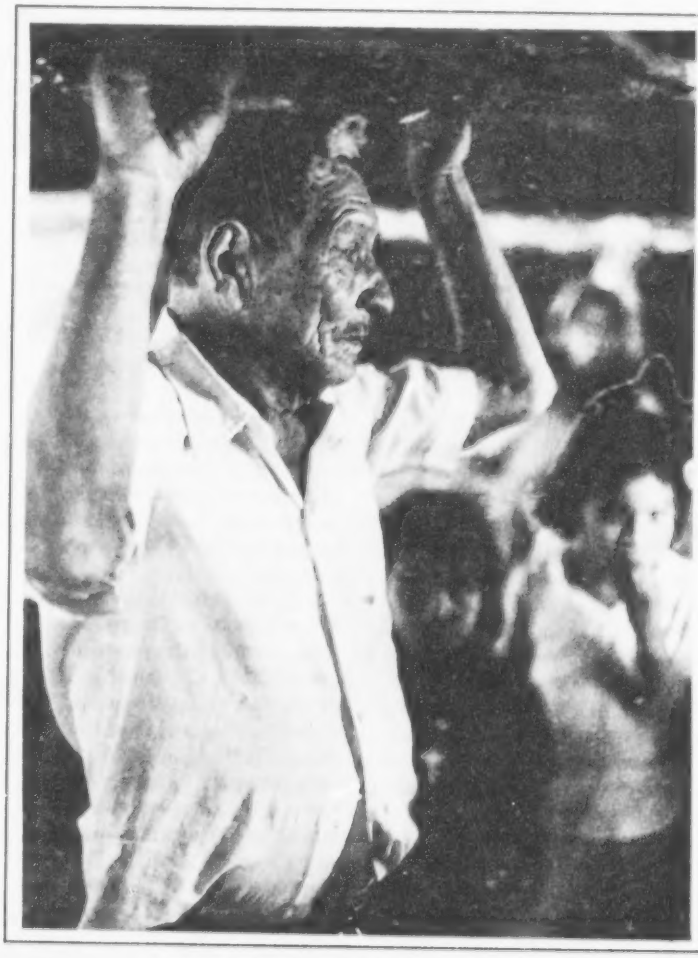
On 17 November, he said he was particularly shocked at the "cold-blooded murder of Father Ignacio Ellacuria, Rector of the Central American University, as well as other Jesuit priests". The General Assembly on 15 December condemned the incident as a "brutal assassination" *(44/165)*.

The Security Council convened on 30 November at El Salvador's request, after an airplane said to be registered in Nicaragua and reportedly carrying anti-aircraft missiles intended for rebel use crashed in south-eastern El Salvador.

Nicaragua said the allegations that Nicaragua was breaching the regional peace agreements were a "cover-up for the tragedy that had long been inflicted on the Salvadoran people".

On 5 December, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar and OAS Secretary-General Joao Baena Soares informed the Central American Presidents that, "much to their regret and for reasons beyond their control", they had been unable to set in motion the Joint Plan to demobilize the Nicaraguan resistance, adopted by the Presidents at Tela, Honduras, on 7 August. The 90-day demobilization operation was to have been completed by 6 December 1989.

However, "it would be useful to persevere", Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said in his end-of-the year report, since "preliminary steps" had been taken to lay the foundation for subsequent implementation of the Plan.



UNHCR Photo 12046/1982

Assembly demands immediate halt of United States intervention in Panama

Similar text vetoed in Security Council

The General Assembly on 29 December demanded "the immediate cessation of the intervention and the withdrawal from Panama of the armed invasion forces of the United States".

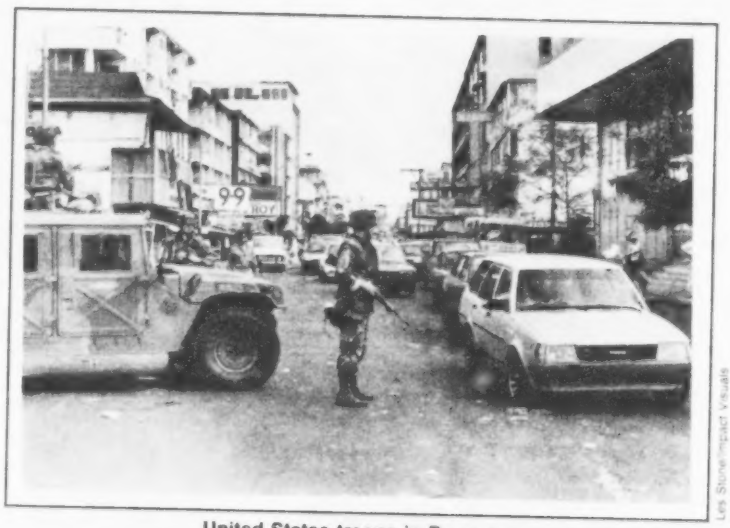
It also strongly deplored the intervention, calling it "a flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States".

In resolution 44/240, adopted by 75 votes to 20, with 40 abstentions, the Assembly demanded full respect for and strict observance of the letter and spirit of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties on the Panama Canal. Among other things, the Treaties provide for the transfer of control of the Canal from the United States to Panama by the year 2000.

The Assembly also called upon all States to uphold and respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Panama. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was requested to monitor the developments in Panama and to report to the Assembly within 24 hours after the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar told the Assembly a day later that he was in no position to provide the substantive report asked of him, since he did not have at his disposal sources of information "other than those publicly available" *(A/44/911)*.

Thirty-five speakers were heard during the two plenary meetings devoted to the situation in Panama (28-29 December).



Les Stone/Impact Visuals

United States troops in Panama.

United States invokes "self-defence"

In a letter to the Security Council President *(S/21035)* released on 20 December, United States Permanent Representative Thomas R. Pickering invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter, saying that his country was acting in exercise of its "inherent right of self-defence", to protect American lives and the integrity of the Panama Canal Treaties.

The United States had acted after exhausting every available diplomatic means to resolve peacefully disputes with Panamanian leader Manuel Antonio Noriega, he said.

After informal consultations throughout the afternoon, the Security Council held an emergency meeting that night at Nicaragua's request to discuss the Panamanian situation.

The Security Council met three more times on the issue during the following days. At the last meeting, on 23 December, three of the Council's permanent members—France, the United Kingdom and the United States—voted against a draft resolution by which the Council would have demanded the immediate cessation of the United States intervention in Panama and the withdrawal of its armed forces.

The vote was 10 to 4—the fourth negative vote was cast by Canada—with 1 abstention (Finland). The Council heard statements by 20 speakers.

But peace still 'elusive'

Negotiations on Kampuchea gather 'unprecedented momentum', S-G says

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar on 24 October reported "unprecedented momentum" in the process of dialogue and negotiations regarding the situation in Kampuchea. Although "peace remains elusive", he said, the results of ongoing intensive diplomatic activity should not be lost. The Paris Conference on Cambodia in mid-1989 had achieved significant progress in elaborating a comprehensive political settlement, he said.

Also stating that Viet Nam had informed him that it had withdrawn all troops between 21 and 26 September, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said total withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea, verified by an effective international control mechanism, would constitute an important element of such a settlement. A verification mechanism acceptable to all concerned had yet to materialize.

In his report to the Assembly (*A/44/670*), Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said there could be no military solution to the problem. The most important outstanding issue was national reconciliation, which must begin with the definition of "viable administrative arrangements for the transitional period leading to the holding of free, fair and internationally-supervised elections".

On 15 and 16 November, the General Assembly enumerated the principal components of a "just, lasting and comprehensive political settlement" of the problem, including withdrawal of all foreign forces, under supervision and control of the UN; creation of an interim administering authority;

UN Photo 143209

Kampuchean refugees in the border camps.

promotion of national reconciliation among all Kampucheans under the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk; and the non-return to the universally condemned policies and practices of a recent past.

Others were: restoration and preservation of Kampuchea's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and its neutral and non-aligned status; the right of the Kampuchean people to determine their own destiny; and commitment by all States to non-interference and non-intervention in Kampuchea's internal affairs, with effective guarantees.

Resolution 44/22 was adopted by a vote of 124 in favour to 17 against, with 12 abstentions.

Use good offices

The Assembly emphasized that the Kampuchean people should be allowed to "exercise its inalienable right to self-determination through internationally supervised free, fair and democratic elections". Troop withdrawal without UN supervision was "not within the framework of a comprehensive political settlement", it said.

All parties concerned were called upon to intensify efforts to resolve the problem through a comprehensive political settlement. The Secretary-General is to continue to exercise his good offices in order to contribute to a comprehensive political settlement.

The Co-Presidents of the Paris Conference on Cambodia (30 July-30 August 1989) were invited to intensify consultations with a view to reconvening the Conference and its committees at an appropriate time.

Appreciation was expressed to countries, the UN and its agencies, and other national and international humanitarian organizations that had given relief assistance to the Kampuchean people. The continuation of such aid, to those along the Thai-Kampuchean border and in Thailand was asked.

Shuttle diplomacy

Iran-Iraq peace talks continue

Ways to move talks forward within the framework of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace between Iran and Iraq have been put forward by Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar through his Personal Representative Jan K. Eliasson during November.

On 27 October, the Security Council had held consultations to review progress in the implementation of resolution 598. In a statement issued after the consultations, Council President L. Yves Fortier of Canada said Council members remained concerned over a lack of tangible progress in achieving full implementation of the resolution and expressed the full support of the Council to the mission of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Eliasson visited the two countries between 31 October and 17 November, shuttling between the two capitals in the UN plane. He conferred with Iran President Hashemi Rafsanjani and Iraq President Saddam Hussein, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, his Iraqi counterpart, Tariq Aziz, and other senior officials.

At the conclusion of his mission, it was reported that Mr. Eliasson's consultations had focused on how to end the current state of no-war no-peace and implement resolution 598. "Both sides expressed in clear terms their present position, which he would convey to the Secretary-General upon his return to Headquarters", according to a statement issued by the UN. On 28 November, the Secretary-General reported to the Security Council on the Eliasson mission.

UN Photo 174728/S. Lein

The two delegations at a Security Council meeting in September.

Resolution 598, adopted unanimously on 20 July 1987, calls *inter-alia* for a cease-fire, an end to all military actions in the region, withdrawal of forces to internationally recognized boundaries, dispatch of a team of UN observers to supervise those actions, and the release and repatriation of prisoners of war.

Mr. Eliasson said the 15-month old cease-fire was "holding well", due to the "understanding and co-operation of the parties and the efforts of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) personnel on both sides".

In December, the Secretary-General met separately in New York with the Foreign Ministers of Iraq and Iran.

Two-session conference on conversion of partial nuclear-test-ban treaty asked by Assembly

Co-operative climate in First Committee noted, nuclear issues dominate

UN Photo

Stating that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is the "highest priority step" towards nuclear disarmament, the General Assembly on 15 December recommended that a conference of States parties to the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty be convened in two sessions—in 1990 and 1991—to convert that agreement into a comprehensive ban on all nuclear-weapon testing, including underground explosions.

Resolution 44/106 was adopted by 127 votes to 2 (United Kingdom, United States), with 22 abstentions, one of 59 texts on disarmament issues approved by the Assembly on the recommendation of its First Committee (Political and Security). Twenty-two of those texts were approved by consensus.

Committee Chairman Adolfo Taylhardat of Venezuela said the Committee's work had benefited from positive trends in the international arena, and had been carried out in a "constructive, co-operative climate", with "great flexibility" exercised. He noted the continuing reduction in the number of drafts considered, with 79 drafts in 1987, 74 in 1988 and 64 in 1989.

Under the terms of the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, an amendment conference must be held if a third of States parties request it. By 15 December, a total of 44 countries had requested such a conference, 5 more than the 39 required.

The Assembly recommended that after preparatory work, the conference should be held from 4 to 8 June 1990 and from 7 to 18 January 1991.

Nuclear issues continued to dominate the First Committee's agenda, with some 20 texts adopted in that area. Conventional disarmament and a chemical weapons ban were also top priorities for most States. Other important topics were: regional disarmament, naval disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space, implications of science and technology for security, arms transfers, confidence-building measures and dumping of radioactive wastes.

Action was taken on a number of new topics, including conversion of military resources, defensive security concepts and policies, education for disarmament, and transparency with regard to military expenditures.

As in the past, the Assembly called for both bilateral and multilateral solutions to disarmament and a more effective role for the UN in the sphere of disarmament. Mutually acceptable, verifiable and effective disarmament measures were desired.

The Disarmament Commission was directed to prepare elements of a draft resolution on the declaration of a third Disarmament Decade by the forty-fifth Assembly.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community", was asked to adopt concrete measures on specific priority issues and provide negotiating mandates to *ad hoc* committees on all agenda items.

The Disarmament Commission, which the Assembly described as "the specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery", was also asked to make every effort to achieve results.

Nuclear issues

The Conference on Disarmament was asked to negotiate a comprehensive test ban, a ban on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and an international legal instrument on the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Steps to create an international seismic monitoring network to verify compliance with a nuclear test ban were asked of the Conference.

Three texts were adopted on the subject of developments in USSR-United States bilateral disarmament negotiations. In a non-aligned text *(44/116K)*, both were asked to achieve a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arms as part of the process leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

A China-sponsored resolution asked *(44/116D)* the super-Powers to take the lead in halting the nuclear arms race. A Western draft called *(44/116B)* on the two countries to spare no effort in attaining all agreed objectives, in accordance with the security interests of all States.

The USSR and the United States were urged to agree to an immediate nuclear-arms freeze, simultaneously stopping production of nuclear weapons and of fissionable material for weapons purposes. All nuclear-weapon States were called on to agree, through a joint declaration, to a comprehensive nuclear-arms freeze.

All nuclear-weapon States, particularly the three depositary Powers of the 1963 Treaty—USSR, United Kingdom, United States—were urged to halt all test explosions "for all time". Verifiable and militarily significant interim measures were asked of nuclear-weapon States, with a view to realizing a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia was supported. The Assembly noted with satisfaction that 11 members of the South Pacific Forum had ratified the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and that China and the USSR had adhered to Protocols 2 and 3 of the Treaty. France was urged not to delay further the ratification of Additional Protocol I of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

UN Photo 102312

A special exhibit on war and peace was held at Headquarters during the General Assembly session.

Chemical ban: high priority

High priority was asked for work on a convention to ban development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. All States were called on to abide by the commitments undertaken in the Declaration of the 1989 Paris Conference on chemical weapons. The Assembly recognized the importance of declarations made by States on whether or not they possessed chemical weapons and of further international data exchanges on the subject.

Continued work on a radiological weapons ban was also asked. Both projects are being undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Assembly welcomed the progress achieved so far in two negotiations, one on new confidence- and security-building measures and the other on conventional armed forces in Europe, both in the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process.

The USSR and the United States were urged to negotiate an early agreement for preventing an arms race in outer space. The Assembly drew the attention of States to the set of principles on freezing and reducing military budgets, prepared by the Disarmament Commission.

The Assembly asked the Secretary-General to complete work by 1990 on the evaluation of the impact of future scientific and technological developments, especially those with potential military applications, on international security.

USSR-US joint initiative

Intensified efforts for world peace and security urged

In the first joint USSR-United States political resolution in UN history, the General Assembly on 15 November called on Member States to intensify their efforts towards ensuring international peace and security through co-operative means, in accordance with the UN Charter. Resolution 44/21 was adopted without a vote.

Under the text, the world body reaffirmed the validity of the Charter and encouraged Member States to co-operate within the UN framework to find "multifaceted approaches to implement and strengthen the principles and the system of peace, security and co-operation laid down in the Charter".

Acting on another new item, proposed by Maldives, the Assembly on 8 December recognized that small States might be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs, and stressed the obligation of all States to respect the principle of territorial integrity and other Charter principles. By resolution 44/51, adopted on the recommendation of its Special Political Committee, it asked regional and international organizations to assist small States in strengthening their security. The Secretary-General was to monitor the security situation of small States and consider using Article 99 of the Charter, under which the Secretary-General "may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security".

UN Photo 175177/E Debeche

Announcing the joint draft on 3 November at Headquarters, from left to right, U.S. Permanent Representative Thomas R. Pickering, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Bolton, USSR Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky, and USSR Permanent Representative Aleksandr M. Belonogov.

Two more texts were adopted on international security questions, these on the recommendation of the First Committee (Political and Security). By resolution 44/126, adopted by 128 votes to 1 (United States), with 24 abstentions, the Assembly reaffirmed the validity of the 1970 Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security and called on all States to refrain from the use or threat of use of force, intervention, interference, aggression, foreign occupation and colonial domination or measures of political and economic coercion. Use of the collective security system was urged.

The Assembly declared that strengthening international peace and security depended on the equitable management of the world economy, eradication of colonialism, respect for human rights and protection of the environment. It also stressed the link between disarmament and development and declared that solutions to various hotbeds of crises should not be imposed by outside Powers "to the detriment of the interest of the parties directly concerned".

In resolution 44/125, the Assembly reaffirmed that the security of the Mediterranean was closely linked with European and international security, and that further efforts were needed to reduce tensions and armaments.

Guardian of world security

UN role in crisis prevention discussed

Wider role for World Court sought

UN Photo 147/87

World Court office building at The Hague.

The United Nations must demonstrate its capacity to function as "guardian of the world security", stated Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuéllar in his 1989 report on the work of the Organization. His appeal for renewed efforts to "activate the potential of the Organization for averting wars" was warmly welcomed during the discussions in the Sixth Committee (Legal) and other fora.

There was a growing recognition that the UN role in preventing and peacefully settling disputes must be enhanced, including resort to and full respect for the International Court of Justice.

The Secretary-General on 1 November announced the establishment of a Trust Fund to assist States in settling disputes through the World Court. Its main purpose is to assist parties with cases before the Court who lack funds for legal expertise.

The Assembly on 4 December urged *(44/31)* all States to observe and promote in good faith provisions of the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes.

The Special Committee on the Charter of the UN and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization was asked to give priority in 1990 to the question of maintenance of international peace and security and, in that context, to consider the issue of fact-finding activities by the United Nations. The elaboration of a draft handbook on peaceful settlement of disputes among States was to continue. The Assembly also drew attention to a new document on the resort to a commission of good offices, mediation or conciliation within the UN.

Preventive diplomacy

The Secretary-General reported on specific ideas to further the preventive role of the UN, including using modern technology to collect information on potential conflict situations, and holding periodic high-level Security Council meetings to consider the state of international peace and security in different regions.

Austria proposed establishing a system that would assist States in preventing possible, or in settling existing environmental disputes and helping investigate situations threatening what has been called the "global commons".

The USSR proposed *(A/44/602)* creating a multilateral centre for reduction of the threat of war, with links to UN Headquarters, capitals of Security Council permanent members and the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement; regional centres for preventing the threat of war; a multilateral agreement to prevent incidents beyond territorial waters; and an international monitoring and control system and an international survey satellite agency. It also favoured emergency economic and humanitarian assistance, including dispatch of volunteers to help prevent and remove tension created by internal socio-economic and other causes.

The Soviet Union also wanted *(A/44/585)* a comprehensive international strategy for "establishing the primacy of law in relations between States". Under it, existing safeguards against circumvention of international law and machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes would be strengthened. Also, efforts to replace one-sided interpretations of principles of international law by a uniform interpretation in the common interests of mankind was favoured.

The USSR also proposed a comprehensive instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes, offering to host a plenipotentiary conference in Moscow, for its adoption.

UN peace-keeping activities need broad support

UN peace-keeping activities require the "broadest and most informed popular support", Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar told a forum on "Peace-keeping in the 1990s," sponsored by Parliamentarians for Global Action at UN Headquarters on 2 November.

Formerly, the image of a peace-keeping operation was that of one conducted mainly with the help of soldiers drawn from neutral countries, he said. Now with operations having many functions, combinations of military, police and civilian personnel were being deployed, such as that of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia.

Conditions for success in peace-keeping operations, he specified, included: a workable mandate, consistent support of the Security Council, aid provision by Member States of military personnel and adequate finances.

He suggested that Member States earmark units in their armed forces for use, when necessary, by the UN. Logistical support should also be readily available. Advanced technologies should be used to monitor ceasefires and troop withdrawals.

The 1989 session of the General Assembly was marked by the search for innovative approaches to UN peace-keeping operations, with new ideas and suggestions being discussed. And some steps have been taken to translate those ideas into practical action.

On 8 December, the Assembly asked *(44/49)* the Secretary-General to provide Member States with information on the requirements for peace-keeping operations and to invite States to identify what they would be ready to contribute to such operations. He was also asked to create a registry of potential contributions by States and to study tasks and services that could be performed by civilian personnel in peace-keeping operations.

The world body also called for exchange of experiences acquired through participation in peace-keeping operations and establishment of national training programmes for military and civilian personnel for such operations. A model "status-of-force" agreement between host countries and the UN should be formulated, it said.

In its other action, the Assembly urged *(44/192 A)* all Member States to ensure payment of their assessments for peace-keeping operations in full and on time. It also noted *(44/192 C)* with concern that troop-contributing States were not being reimbursed to the full extent of the established rates for some operations and asked the Secretary-General to pay arrears due to current and former troop-contributing States.

The Assembly welcomed the idea to establish a planning and monitoring group for peace-keeping operations within the UN Secretariat. On 4 January, the Secretary-General announced the establishment of such a group.

UN Photo

A member of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia—the Organization's most recent peace-keeping operation.

'A marathon race'

Programme for special UN Decade on decolonization considered

Colonialism in all its forms is incompatible with the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1960 Declaration on decolonization and poses a serious threat to international peace and security.

So stated the General Assembly on 11 December in taking action on a wide range of decolonization issues, including work on an action plan for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Twenty-one to twenty-five texts on decolonization were adopted by the Assembly on the recommendation of its Fourth Committee (Decolonization).

Committee Chairman Robert Van Lierop of Vanuatu said the process of decolonization was like a marathon race: in both cases it was more difficult to finish than to start. Namibia's impending independence was a step closer to the completion of the decolonization process, the Organization's own "marathon", he went on. The international community must guarantee the timely completion of the final stages of Namibia's evolution to independence.

The Decade to end colonialism "encompassed one of the most laudable goals of the UN", he said. The completion of the decolonization process was the greatest assurance of the security and peaceful development of countries which had already attained their political independence.

The Assembly reaffirmed its determination to act to ensure "the complete and speedy eradication of colonialism," as well as its recogni-

UN Photo 14729

tion of the legitimacy of the struggle of the peoples under colonial and alien domination to exercise their right to self-determination and independence "by all the necessary means at their disposal".

In 1988, the Assembly declared the 1990s as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In 1989, it requested suggestions from Member States and UN organizations as input for an action plan for the Decade aimed at "ushering in the twenty-first century as a world free from colonialism".

The Assembly also endorsed the programme of activities recommended by the Special Committee on decolonization in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the 1960 Declaration on decolonization. Among other things, a special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly will be held in October 1990, at which a special declaration is scheduled for adoption.

New Caledonia, 13 small Territories

Noting the positive measures being pursued in New Caledonia by the French authorities to promote political, economic and social development in the Territory, the Assembly urged all the parties involved to maintain a dialogue and to refrain from acts of violence. All parties were also invited to continue promoting a framework for "the peaceful progress of the Territory towards an act of self-determination in which all options are open, and which would safeguard the rights of all New Caledonians".

The Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom were asked to continue their negotiations to reach a definitive solution to the problem of Gibraltar.

The United Kingdom, administering Power of several Territories, was asked to counter problems related to drug trafficking in Anguilla, the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the British Virgin Islands. As administering Power of Pitcairn, it was also asked to continue to respect "the very individual life-style that the people of the Territory have chosen" and to preserve, promote and protect it.

New Zealand, administering Power of Tokelau, was urged to preserve the inhabitants' social, cultural and traditional heritage in carrying out the Territory's political and economic development.

The Assembly noted with concern the trade and transportation dependency of St. Helena and the continued presence of military facilities on the dependency of Ascension Island. The presence of military bases and installations in Bermuda and Guam was considered a possible obstacle to implementation of the decolonization Declaration.

Continued assistance to Territories ravaged by Hurricane Hugo—the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and the United States Virgin Islands—was urged.

In adopting resolutions on all small Territories, the Assembly reiterated its view that such factors as territorial size, geographical location, population size and limited natural resources should in no way delay the speedy exercise by the peoples of those Territories of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

With regard to certain Territories, such as American Samoa, administering Powers were urged to promote their social and economic development.

Other action

In other action, colonial Powers were asked to withdraw military installations from Territories they supervised and to refrain from establishing new ones. All States were urged to end collaboration with South Africa in the political, economic, military and nuclear fields.

All States, specialized agencies and other UN bodies were called on to provide moral and material assistance to the people of Namibia, both during the transitional period and after independence. Assistance to the colonial peoples was also asked for.

Other action concerned the dissemination of information on decolonization; and implementation of the decolonization Declaration by specialized agencies. Also dealt with were issues relating to information from Non-Self-Governing Territories; the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa; and offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Bermuda Archive Photo

1990s declared UN Decade of International Law

UPI/Bettmann News Photos

Airport security is the subject of a new ICAO Protocol.

The General Assembly on 17 November declared the period 1990-1999 as the United Nations Decade of International Law, thus heeding a growing world-wide recognition of the need to strengthen the rule of law in international relations.

The Assembly stated *(44/23)* that the Decade should promote acceptance of and respect for the principles of international law; promote means and methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, including resort to and full respect of the International Court of Justice; encourage the progressive development and codification of international law; and encourage the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law.

The Secretary-General was asked to begin work on a programme of action for the Decade, including the possibility of holding a third international peace conference or other suitable international conference at its end.

The Assembly on 4 December also condemned as criminal and not justifiable "all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever and by whomever committed", and called on all States to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in other States. Resolute measures to eliminate international terrorism and its underlying causes were asked.

The immediate and safe release of all hostages and abducted persons, wherever and by whomever they were being held, was also asked. Concern was expressed over the growing and dangerous links between terrorist groups, drug traffickers and their paramilitary gangs, which resorted to all types of violence.

The Assembly also welcomed efforts by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to promote universal acceptance of international air-security conventions, welcoming the recent adoption of the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation. Also welcomed was the adoption by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf.

The item on the UN Law Decade was discussed in plenary, while the terrorism resolution was 1 of 13 texts on legal issues adopted by the world body on the recommendation of its Sixth Committee (Legal).

Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the USSR submitted a proposal to establish within the UN a fact-finding body to deal with acts of international terrorism, and a centre on problems of international terrorism.

1994 proclaimed 'Year of the Family'

Rededication to social progress asked

UN Photo 134135/A Jangen

Family issues will receive heightened international attention in 1994, proclaimed as "International Year of the Family" by the General Assembly on 8 December *(44/82)*.

The Year will highlight global awareness of family issues and the improvement of national mechanisms directed at tackling serious family-related problems.

Also on 8 December, the Assembly commemorated *(44/57)* the 20th anniversary of the proclamation in 1969 of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

The Assembly asked *(44/70)* for increased international co-operation to implement the World Programme of Action for the UN Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992). Margaret J. Anstee, Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna, warned that by the end of the century, the number of disabled people would have risen to 30 to 40 per cent of the population of some countries.

"One billion elderly are projected for the year 2025, and more than 70 per cent of them will be living in developing countries," reported Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar *(A/44/420)*. Aging is one priority of the new International Development Strategy for the Fourth UN Development Decade as well as of the UN medium-term plan for 1992-1997. The Assembly also endorsed the outline of a UN programme in the field of aging for 1992 and beyond.

Young people should be an active part of the political and socio-economic life of their countries, the Assembly stated *(44/59)*. They suffer from insufficient education and unemployment, the Assembly said. Ms. Anstee noted that one of every five inhabitants of the world is young and, by the year 2000, the number of young persons would have reached the billion mark.

Other issues

Hundreds of millions of people all over the world lack adequate shelter, said Arcot Ramachandran, Executive Director of the UN Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), on World Habitat Day, 2 October. These included the many millions who are homeless. On 19 December, the Assembly asked *(44/173)* for support by Governments for the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, adopted in 1987.

On 8 December, the Assembly approved texts on the importance of population participation in development and human rights, on science and technology in connection with social development, on achievement of social justice, and on social and economic changes for social progress, particularly in Africa.

Women: A UN priority

World conference may be held in 1995

The General Assembly has asked the Commission on the Status of Women to consider the question of holding in 1995 a fourth world conference on women.

The first UN world conference on women was held in Mexico City in 1975, the second in Copenhagen in 1980, and the third in Nairobi in 1985.

Adopted in Kenya at the end of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985), the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women set goals to the year 2000 in such areas as literacy, health, population, and environment. Economic policies would be more "effective and sensitive to human needs", Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar told the Assembly, if women were involved.

The advancement of women is not "an impossible dream" dreamt by women, stated Margaret Anstee, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, "but a component in the enhancement of life for all". She introduced on 18 October issues related to women to the Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural).

"By accepting to strive for equality between women and men by the year 2000, the international community has committed itself to one of the most ambitious targets attempted by social policy," she said.

TASS Photo/Y Belinsky & B Kolesnikov

Bill of rights

The Assembly on 18 December commemorated the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women—an "international bill of rights" for women, according to Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar.

The UN system should pay particular attention to the role of elderly women as participants in political, economic, social and cultural development, the Assembly declared on 8 December. It also called on Member States to improve the situation of rural women and to integrate them into national development plans at all levels.

The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) will observe its tenth anniversary in 1990. The Assembly praised the Institute for the "significance and scope" of its activities and appealed for more resources to help advance its research, training and information programmes.

The Assembly also called for improvement in the status and participation of women in an institution close to home—the UN Secretariat.

'Like a puzzle without a centre-piece'

Development without women's effective participation "is like a puzzle without a centre-piece", Sharon Capeling-Alakija, Director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), told the Third Committee on 27 October.

And women's role in development, grossly overlooked in the past, must be a vital part of planning for the 1990s, states the *1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*.

The 390-page study updates an earlier survey, presented to the 1985 Nairobi Conference at the end of the Women's Decade. An expert group reviewed the report in February 1989, finding that despite economic progress measured in growth rates, economic progress for women had halted, social progress slowed, and social well-being in many cases had deteriorated.

Women must now be recognized as a major force for change, the report states. Policies must be modified to reflect "a global norm of equality between men and women".

The Survey is the product of several years collaboration of UN organizations with development programmes. Debt and adjustment, development of key economic sectors, policy issues and interrelationships between equality, development and peace are explored.

Assembly adopts new Convention

After 10 years of negotiations, the General Assembly on 20 November adopted an international Convention on the Rights of the Child. It took the Assembly only two minutes to officially turn the 54-article instrument into a universal standard against which children's basic rights will be measured throughout the world from now on.

The Convention, an initiative of Poland, was adopted by consensus on the 30th anniversary of the 1959 Declaration on the Rights of the Child. It must be ratified by 20 countries before it enters into force.

The Convention defines a child as "every human being below the age of 18 years".

"For children, this is the Magna Carta", James P. Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said at a press conference shortly after the vote was taken. "To get one common doctrine is a near miracle in its own right... It creates a new international norm."

He predicted that as a result of the Convention, within the next decade there would be a shift in attitudes regarding children's rights, comparable to earlier changes in norms relating to slavery, colonialism, race and the environment.

Assembly President Joseph N. Garba stated that "the rights of the child have now gone from a declaratory statement of purpose into what will become a binding piece of international legislation".

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said the Convention was "as visionary as it is timely".

Adoption, abortion and a minimum age for military combat were among issues debated as the draft wound its way through the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, both of which approved it during their 1989 sessions.

The issue of abortion had arisen during the 10 years of negotiations on the pact, Mr. Grant said. The Convention preamble quotes the Declaration, stating that a child "needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth". Some countries have interpreted this as possibly restricting or banning abortion. That, Mr. Grant said, had been left to States Parties to implement in their own legal systems.

Any State Party not altogether happy with a specific point in the Convention may propose an amendment in the future. Its language had been left more broadly stated than some would have liked, Mr. Grant acknowledged.

A Committee on the Rights of the Child, made up of 10 experts, is to be established to monitor compliance with Convention provisions.

. . . For the children of the world . . .

Children—almost half of the world's population, both girls and boys, perhaps the most vulnerable members of society—will benefit from the most recently adopted UN Convention.

"The galvanizing concept of the Convention is the best interest of the child, recognizing the child as an individual who can participate, not just a member of a family", said Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights Jan Martenson.

Some of the text's main points are:

- Every child has the inherent right to life, to a name, to acquire a nationality and, "as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents".
- Children shall have the right to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion, association and peaceful assembly, education, rest and leisure, social security, "the highest attainable standard of health" and a standard of living "adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development".
- Children shall not be separated from their parents against their will. States Parties will respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents, deal with family reunification "in a positive, humane and expeditious manner", and combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.
- Children shall be protected from economic exploitation and from hazardous work, drug use and trafficking, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and "all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare".
- A minority or indigenous child shall not be denied the right to his or her own culture, religion or language.
- A mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life.
- A child who is capable of forming his or her own views should have the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, including any judicial and administrative proceedings.
- No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Capital punishment or life imprisonment shall not be imposed for offences committed by persons under 18.
- States Parties will establish "a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law".
- States Parties shall take "all feasible measures" so that children under 15 "do not take direct part in hostilities" and "shall refrain from recruiting" them into their armed forces.
- The best interests of the child shall be "the paramount consideration" for adoption.

Drug menace to be focus of special session

International panel to be set up

Deep concern over the "devastating effect of drug abuse on individuals and society" led the General Assembly on 1 November to call for a special session to spearhead the international fight against drug abuse and narcotics trafficking *(44/16)*.

Scheduled for 20 to 23 February 1990 at UN Headquarters, the session will aim at rallying international efforts to counter the drug scourge as a matter of urgency, with representation at a high political level.

In a particularly strong statement before the plenary, Colombia President Virgilio Barco Vargas had recommended holding a special session to consider urgent action to address the serious problem of consumption and production of illegal drugs.

President Barco Vargas said that narcotics, and its companion, terrorism, pay "no respect to borders". A global commitment is needed, he explained, to reduce the demand for drugs, control the supply of chemicals used to process cocaine, reduce and control arms sales to drug traffickers and terrorists, and halt money-laundering.

WHO Photo/H. Christoph

A threat to millions

The Assembly on 15 December called for intensified efforts to counter the spread of drug abuse and to increase international action to curtail narcotics production and trafficking.

Citing alarm at what it termed a "dramatic increase" in drug abuse and illicit production and trafficking "threatening the health and well-being of millions of people, in particular youth, in the majority of States in the world", the Assembly asked *(41/141)* the Secretary-General to select a panel of international experts to work with UN officials to enhance the efficiency of UN drug control bodies.

It also requested States to consider the possibility of declaring a UN decade against drug abuse and the establishment of a reserve pool of experienced narcotics agents and experts pledged by States for limited term service to other States. The feasibility of a UN anti-drug force to help States interdict the supply and help eliminate illicit trafficking of drugs will also be examined.

Establishment of an international

criminal court for crimes involving illicit narcotic drug trafficking across national frontiers is to be studied by the International Law Commission at the Assembly's request, according to a decision *(44/39)* adopted without a vote on 4 December.

Drug control given top priority

The Assembly lamented the lack of resources hindering UN organs in the drug control area. The Secretary-General was asked to "give priority to narcotics control activities" and States were urged to support a "truly comprehensive" global programme of action for drug abuse control.

In other action, the Assembly asked *(44/142)* for a study of the economic and social consequences of illicit traffic in drugs, focusing on the magnitude of economic transactions related to drug trafficking and the impact of drug-related money transfers and conversion on national economic systems.

Some Governments have made "serious efforts" in crop substitution, rural development and interdiction programmes, the Assembly noted, asking that international economic and technical co-operation in that area be stepped up. The Assembly said a system should be established to identify the "methods and routes used for transit traffic of illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances" as an aid to interdiction.

States were urged to deal with the "demand side" of the drug control equation by taking "prevention and rehabilitation measures and also increasingly stringent political and legal measures" to eliminate the demand for drugs. The Assembly cited the United Kingdom proposal to convene an international conference on drug demand reduction in April 1990.

Drug treaty garners more support

The UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, adopted in Vienna on 19 December 1988, had 89 signatories—43 signed immediately—by 20 December 1989. Four States have ratified it. Twenty ratifications are needed for entry into force.

The Convention covers a host of drug control areas: sanctions for drug trafficking offences, confiscation of proceeds and property from drug trafficking, extradition, legal assistance, international co-operation in law enforcement and training, monitoring of substances used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs, and measures to eradicate illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and demand for illicit drugs.

A world war against drug abuse

Margaret J. Anstee, Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna and co-ordinator of UN drug control programmes, offered no apologies for using the word "war" when she warned heads of national drug law enforcement agencies of "the rapidly gathering threat" to the stability of societies posed by drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

"World-wide traffic in drugs is now second only to that in armaments", Ms. Anstee told a September 1989 meeting of drug agency heads. The global community must face the "sobering fact that humankind is predominantly engaged in the commerce of self-destruction".

The Vienna-based UN drug apparatus includes:

- A 40-member UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs—established in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council as the main UN policy-making body on international drug control.
- A UN Division of Narcotic Drugs—the secretariat and executive arm of the Commission, which assists Member States in implementing the drug control treaties, performs tasks entrusted to the Secretary-General under the treaties, and is the nucleus of UN information training, and research on drug-related issues.
- A 13-member International Narcotics Control Board—established to limit the cultivation, production, manufacture and use of drugs to an adequate amount required for medical and scientific purposes. The Board reports annually on the world-wide drug control situation.
- The UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control—created in 1971, is the main source of funding for drug-related activities in the UN system. Financed entirely by voluntary contributions, mainly from Governments, 152 Fund-supported projects were being carried out in 49 countries in 1989.

Violence, terrorism, corruption

Crime Congress in Havana to address growing global crime

The global fight against crime is to be given renewed impetus through the Eighth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in Havana, Cuba, from 27 August to 7 September 1990.

Previous congresses have "influenced national policies and practices", the General Assembly noted in resolution 44/71, adopted on 8 December. The Havana meeting should make a major contribution to the "solution of problems related to crime prevention and criminal justice", it stated.

Violence, terrorism, corruption and illegal trade in narcotic drugs were spreading, the Assembly said, due to an expanding volume in and the transnational character of organized crime.

In another resolution *(44/72)*, the Assembly said the "increase both in the incidence and seriousness of crime in many parts of the world" and "its negative effects on the quality of life and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms" reflected a deteriorating situation.

Recognizing that "economic and technical" constraints impeded many countries in their fight against crime, the Assembly warned that "technological advances" could be used in the "perpetration of sophisticated forms of criminality".

High-level government representatives, prosecutors, judges, criminologists, penologists and senior police officials, as well as experts in criminal law, human rights and rehabilitation, are expected to participate in the Eighth Congress, which is being organized by the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Vienna-based UN Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

The global meeting will focus on transborder crimes, including illicit drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, terrorism, economic and white-collar crime, corruption and offences against the environment and national cultural heritage.

More than 600 representatives from 129 Member States, many intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, relevant specialized agencies and UN bodies, regional commissions and UN crime prevention and criminal justice institutes took part in five preparatory sessions during 1989.

During the Eighth Congress, workshops on the computerization of criminal justice information and on the alternatives to imprisonment will be held. The Assembly urged Member States to provide research and technical papers about their national experiences.

UN congresses on crime prevention have been held every five years since 1955. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said the importance of the Congress "derives from the fact that transnational criminality has become one of the most pressing problems confronting contemporary societies".

It was "thriving at unprecedented levels and in ways previously unheard of", he continued, threatening the lives, security and property of individuals and communities. He cited world-wide trafficking in drugs and other forms of organized crime as "especially serious", concluding that criminality, "once traditionally regarded as being of purely domestic concern", can "no longer be tackled by Governments individually".

UN Photo

Death penalty Protocol adopted, World conference on human rights considered

The General Assembly has opened for signature, ratification and accession a new human rights instrument aimed at the abolition of the death penalty.

The 11-article Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, was adopted by the Assembly on 15 December by a vote of 59 to 26, with 48 abstentions. It calls for States Parties to commit themselves to take measures to abolish the death penalty within their jurisdictions.

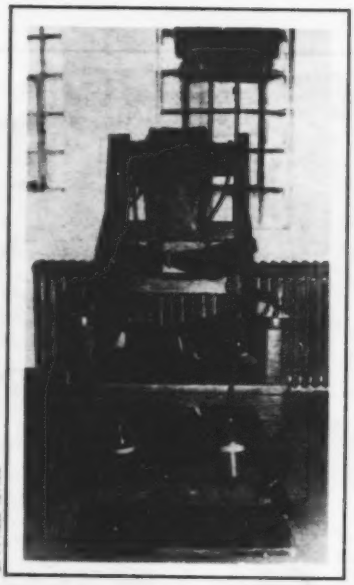
Noting that article 6 of the Covenant refers to the death penalty "in terms that strongly suggest that its abolition is desirable", the Assembly favoured an international commitment to a ban on capital punishment.

Abolition of the death penalty contributes to "enhancement of human dignity and progressive development of human rights", the Assembly stated, adding that all measures with that aim should be considered as "progress in the enjoyment of the right to life".

In another action, the Assembly also asked Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to seek the views of Governments and international bodies on convening a world conference on human rights.

Such a meeting would deal at the highest level with the crucial questions facing the UN in connection with the promotion and protection of human rights, it stated.

Noting progress made by the UN towards achieving respect for human rights for all, the Assembly called appropriate a review of UN accomplishments through its human rights programme and what remained to be done. The first world conference on human rights was held in 1968.



UPI Photo 101102

The Assembly also welcomed Iran's invitation to the Commission on Human Rights Special Representative to make his first visit to that country. Iran said such a visit would result in a report "based on realities rather than allegations".

As for other country reports, the Assembly urged a comprehensive political solution in Afghanistan; appealed for a resumption of dialogue to secure agreements on El Salvador; and expressed satisfaction at the progress of the Chilean electoral process as an important step towards the rapid return of democracy in that country.

During the forty-fourth Assembly, work continued on a convention to protect the rights of all migrant workers and their families, with the aim of adopting it in 1990.

The Assembly also recommended expansion of the membership of the Human Rights Commission.

Calling for respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes, the Assembly strongly appealed to States to abstain from financing or providing, directly or indirectly, any form of overt or covert support for political parties or groups and from taking actions to undermine the electoral process in any country.

In other action, the Assembly:

- Asked for revised draft guidelines for regulating computerized personal data files;
- Wanted further consideration of draft principles and guarantees to protect persons suffering from mental disorder or detained on the grounds of mental ill-health;
- Appealed for effective action to eliminate summary or arbitrary executions; and
- Supported continuing efforts for self-determination and to combat racism.

Country reports reviewed

Two UN committees met in Geneva in October and November to review reports from nations adhering to international human rights instruments. The Committee against Torture (13-24 November) examined documents from 10 nations adhering to the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Steps taken by four countries to implement the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were examined by the Human Rights Committee (23 October-10 November).

Global warming ignites Assembly action

Brazil will host 1992 conference

Impact Visuals/R. Reinhard

Harvesting the rain forests, Para, Brazil.

The 159 States Members of the UN have agreed to draft as soon as possible a convention to protect the Earth's climate and to convene a world conference in Brazil in 1992 on ways to encourage environmentally sound development, at which such a treaty could be adopted. They also agreed to consider ways to avert the potentially damaging impact of climate change and remove its causes while the convention is being negotiated. Resolutions on the conference and the climate convention were adopted by the Assembly on 22 December by consensus *(44/228, 44/207)*.

A moratorium by 30 June 1992 on all large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing on the high seas was also called for by the Assembly. The use of large-scale driftnets in the open seas can be a "highly indiscriminate and wasteful fishing

method", threatening the effective conservation of fish, birds and marine mammals, the Assembly said in a resolution also adopted by consensus on 22 December *(44/225)*.

The Assembly designated the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The first Wednesday of October will be International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction *(44/236)*.

The best way to protect the environment of Antarctica "for the benefit of all mankind" was to turn that continent into a nature reserve or a world park, the Assembly declared. All nations, it said, should participate in negotiations to create a régime to protect the Antarctic environment.

Efforts to ban prospecting and mining in Antarctica were to be supported and all activities there were to be for peaceful scientific investigation only. The vote on resolution 44/124 B was 114 to none, with 8 abstentions.

High tide alert

Climate change may occur due to increasing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons, methane and nitrous oxide.

Most of the current emission of pollutants "originates in developed countries", the Assembly contended, and therefore "those countries have the main responsibility for combating such pollution".

Thermal expansion of sea water caused by global warming could lead to intensified flooding, erosion of coastal areas and damage to islands and low-lying coastal areas, the Assembly warned, asking for continued discussion of this issue *(44/206)*.

'An ecological catastrophe'

United Kingdom Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told the Assembly on 13 November that the 1992 environment and development conference would be among the most important the UN had ever held.

In calling for the conference, the Assembly lamented the "continuing deterioration of the state of the environment and the serious degradation of the global life-support systems".

It warned that if such trends continue, the global ecological balance could be disrupted, resulting in "an ecological catastrophe". Poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated, the Assembly stated, necessitating environmental protection in developing countries as part of the development process.

The Assembly listed 23 objectives for the conference, including an assessment of the state of the environment, identification of regional and global strategies to deal with major environmental issues and examination of ways to transfer technology and resources needed to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development.

A daunting task

The Second World Climate Conference, set for Geneva, 12 to 21 November 1990, will discuss the first major assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The report will cover the state of science and impact of global warming as well as policy options and strategies to limit and cope with climate change.

UNEP Executive Director Mostafa K. Tolba told the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) that these options will have to address the major economic activities of the human race, including energy, industry, transportation, agriculture and forestry.

A special three-day session of the UNEP Governing Council will be held in 1990 to deal with priority environmental issues and ways to enhance the role of UNEP within the UN system.

Nuclear and other dangers

The Assembly also:

- Declared that rules of international law on liability and compensation for damage resulting from the transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes must be developed *(44/226)*;
- Asked the UN Sudano-Sahelian Office, a joint venture of UNEP and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), to mobilize more resources to cope with the "worsening" of desertification *(44/172)*;
- Appealed for resources for early-warning systems against the threat of desert locusts *(44/438)*;
- Asked that the potentially harmful effects of atomic radiation be examined and analysed in terms of its effects on people and their environment and called for the highest standards of safety in the design and operation of nuclear plants so as to minimize risks to life, health and the environment *(44/13)*; and
- Expressed grave concern regarding any use of nuclear waste that would constitute radiological warfare and threaten the national security of all States and called for States to prevent dumping of nuclear wastes that would infringe upon the national sovereignty of other States *(44/116 R)*.

Major uncertainties face world economy

1990s pose challenges

The next decade is likely to be marked by "major uncertainties" resulting from rapid changes in the structures and patterns of the world economy, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar told the General Assembly on 24 October.

The development dialogue has suffered, he declared on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Developing countries "risk remaining on the periphery of the world economy".

Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation Antoine Blanca set the tone for debate on a wide range of economic topics in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) when he said that a new era in multilateralism would not be viable "unless it were underpinned by world-wide economic and social progress, particularly in the developing countries".

William H. Draper III, appointed during the session to another four-year term as Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), said that it was "absolutely imperative" that human goals be fully integrated in development strategies for the 1990s.

Development initiatives plentiful

The General Assembly will hold a special session on international economic co-operation from 23 to 27 April 1990. "Challenges of the 1990s", including revitalized economic growth for developing countries, is high on its agenda.

Another major gathering to spur development action is the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, set for 3 to 14 September in Paris.

Also in 1990, work will begin on the International Development Strategy for the Fourth UN Development Decade (1991-2000).

The Assembly also proclaimed the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-1999) and the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1991-2000).

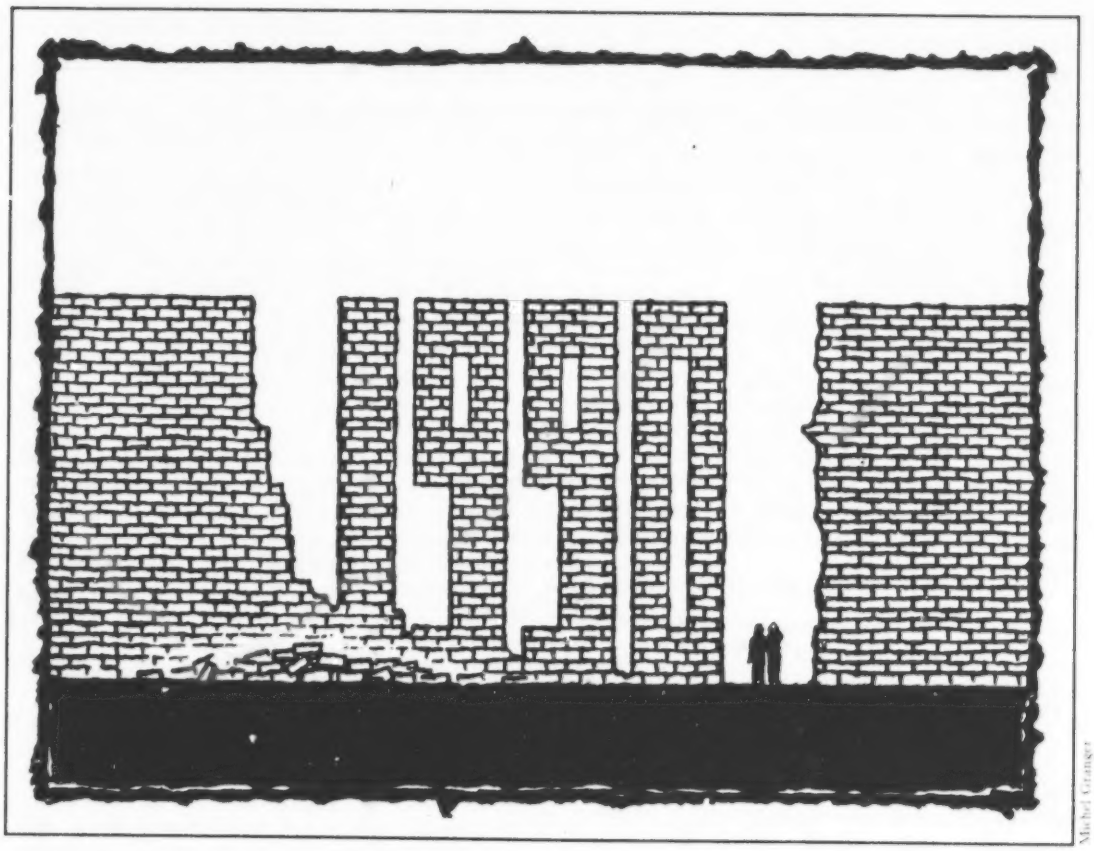
Trade and development

Seven resolutions on trade and development were adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December. Action on the needs and problems of land-locked developing countries, eliminating the use of coercive economic measures, an international code of conduct on transfer of technology, and the trade embargo against Nicaragua were among topics addressed. A call for more stable market conditions for commodities was made.

On 3 November, the Secretary-General reported *(A/44/631)* on international monetary issues, calling for more flexible international fiscal policies to offset increased instability of exchange rates of major currencies. A substantial increase in external resources to aid developing countries was also urged. Convertibility of the Soviet rouble and liberalization of Soviet external payments were examined.

Poverty a key concern

Poverty remains "a major issue of concern for many developing countries and the international community", according to an 18 September report of the Secretary-General *(A/44/467)*. The World Bank Development Committee reported a staggering 950 million people—between one fifth and one sixth of the world's population—live in "absolute poverty". Those affected suffer from malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, short life expectancy and high rates of infant mortality. The major challenge to policy makers and multilateral agencies, the document concludes, is increasing the earnings capacity of the poor, to make them "less vulnerable to future crises".



Michel Granger

Special report on debt crisis

Global economic growth hampered by debt burden, but new initiatives offer some hope

Massive external debt—presently estimated at $1.3 trillion—remains at the heart of the continuing economic woes suffered by some 70 UN Member States. The General Assembly lamented this seven-year crisis of developing countries, noting the "serious social consequences" and "unsatisfactory rates of growth of output and development" that accompany the debt burden.

A 14-paragraph resolution *(44/205)*, adopted on 22 December by 139 votes to 1 (United States), emphasized the need for "a durable solution to the debt problems" in developing countries. The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) debated the debt crisis over a four-day period.

The Assembly stated it welcomed recent debt reduction initiatives. It also called for a "more open international trading system", enhanced diversification of developing countries' exports, increased external resources and lower interest rates in developed countries.

In developing countries, a rise in savings and investment, reduction of inflation, and improved efficiency

were urged. Industrialized countries should have "coherent and co-ordinated policies", aimed at addressing the "imbalances in the world economy", the Assembly emphasized.

A proposal for a UN debt advisory commission was deferred for consideration at the forty-fifth session.

The debt crisis stands at the centre of stagnant growth in Africa and deteriorating growth in Latin America, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar reported *(A/44/628)* on 16 October. He cited the unprecedented rise in negative net resource transfers from developing countries to $33 billion in 1988, up from $26 billion in 1987. Banks must now "recognize their losses", he continued, while troubled debtor countries need reform and adjustment.

Political stability threatened

Debt-ridden nations may also experience a threat to their "social and political stability", the Assembly warned in its omnibus text on debt.

Addressing the Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) on 9 October, Antoine Blanca, Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, said that in the present period, it had not always been possible to distinguish between social damages from the "prolonged economic decline" of developing countries and "the social costs of adjustment programmes" that were implemented because of balance-of-payments difficulties.

Adjustment measures, such as currency devaluation, price decontrols and elimination of public subsidies, have "brought unbearable social costs", he explained, adding that "the resulting social tension mounted to the point of explosion" in several cases.

Some progress seen

Debt is a severe problem for sub-Saharan African nations, as well as for 17 highly indebted, middle income countries. The more than 400 million people of Latin America are particularly affected as two thirds of total external debt is owed by their countries.

The Assembly cited recent initiatives aimed at reducing the amount of debt and debt servicing owed by developing countries, as well as debt relief measures, as a "conceptual advance and important contribution to the efforts aimed at dealing with the debt crisis".

Mr. Blanca called for action at both national and international levels to stimulate investment and growth. He said that "a just and lasting solution" to the debt problem could no longer be deferred. Proposals by the United States, France and Japan formed a "sound basis" for reaching a "political consensus" on the debt issue, he said.

In March 1989, United States Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady proposed a new way to deal with what has been called the "debt overhang" of developing countries. A key feature is the reduction of external debt and debt service in countries undertaking sound economic reforms. The "Brady initiative", widely supported in both industrial and developing countries, urges international financial institutions and other official creditors to provide financial support for debt and debt-service reduction operations.

Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have adopted policies and operational guidelines to support this initiative. Several countries have negotiated debt and debt-service reduction with their commercial bank creditors, although agreements have not yet been finalized.

Simplified schemes stressed

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar called for accelerated and simplified debt-reduction schemes, as well as more speed and flexibility in implementing the current debt strategy. Debt-reduction efforts also need a greater level of financing, he told the Second Committee on 1 November. Low-income countries are particularly in need of write-offs and interest rate reductions, he added.

The Assembly emphasized that several measures are required if debt reduction is to reactivate economic growth and sustained development in the developing countries. There must be negotiation of financial packages to support growth-oriented adjustment programmes and a review by creditor Governments of tax, regulatory and accounting practices to create a "supportive policy environment".

Also, the debt rescheduling process must be enhanced so that it takes into account development-oriented policies and programmes. Multilateral financial institutions must have adequate resources and there must be assistance to debtor developing countries faced with "large and bunched debts" to these institutions. Innovative debt-reduction approaches using secondary market discounts must be continued. All parties should work "towards a growth-oriented solution of the problems of external indebtedness of developing countries".

UN debt representative named

On 8 December, former Prime Minister of Italy Bettino Craxi was named as the Secretary-General's Personal Representative on debt. Mr. Craxi is to meet during the year with Government leaders of both creditor and debtor countries, as well as heads of financial institutions and banks, to explore ways to promote a lessening of the debt burden.

Chronicle BookWatch

Yearbook of the United Nations, Vol. 39, 1985

Department of Public Information (DPI)
United Nations, New York, 1989, 1494 pp., $95.
ISBN 0-7923-0503-5
Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht, Netherlands.
Kluwer Academic Publishers, Norwell, Massachusetts, United States

The *UN Yearbook*—the only single-volume reference work of its kind—is essential to those seeking readily available information on United Nations activities in the political, economic, social, humanitarian and legal areas. It also provides data on organizations of the UN system, and includes detailed indexes.

Right to Adequate Food as a Human Right

Asbjorn Eide
Human Rights Study Series, Number 1
UN Centre for Human Rights, Geneva
UN Publications, New York, 1989, 73 pp., $9.
Sales No. E.89.XIV.2 ISBN 92-1-154075-5

First in a new series reproducing reports and studies by Special Rapporteurs on human rights, this powerful analysis will be a landmark in its field. Mr. Eide examines the right to adequate food in the context of economic, social and cultural rights and international law. His insightful treatment of entitlements and the obligations of States and the international community form the basis for recommendations to Governments, NGOs and the UN that could help achieve food security worldwide.

African Development Prospects: A Policy Modeling Approach

Edited by Dominick Salvatore
UN Department of International Economic and Social Affairs
Taylor & Francis, Bristol, Pennsylvania, 1989
476 pp., $80. ISBN 0-8448-1567-5

Dedicated to the children of Africa, this collection of studies originated in a UN project on the balance of payments in several African economies. The problems and prospects of African development are reviewed from economic, social and political perspectives. What must be done to "put Africa on a long-run, self-sustaining development path is clear," a UN expert concludes, but "what is now needed is the continued resolve of the African people and a much greater commitment on the part of the international community".

UN Disarmament Studies

Taylor and Francis, Bristol, Pennsylvania, 1989
152 pp., $35. ISBN 0-8448-1617-5

Advocates of disarmament will welcome having in one volume studies on "the climatic and other global effects of nuclear war" and "the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures". The panel on global effects concluded that "no one would escape the awful consequences of major nuclear war even if the theatre of conflict was geographically restricted to a small part of the Northern Hemisphere". Even without war, they said, the "negative long-term consequences of military expenditures overshadow any positive short-term effects". These are sobering thoughts from invaluable studies for the 1990s.

The World Bank Atlas, 1989

The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1989
29 pp., ISBN 0-8213-1354-1

Using six-colour maps and charts, the imaginative creators of the 22nd edition of this book reveal the trends and differences in key economic and social indicators from 185 countries and territories. Data on population growth, daily calorie supply per capita, life expectancy at birth, fertility and illiteracy spring to life in graphic comparisons with the statistics of economic activity. One chart vividly demonstrates the global disparity between population and gross national product by contrasting "where the people are" with "where the income is".

Management of Government Information Systems: Elements of Strategies and Policies

Department of Technical Co-operation for Development
UN Publications, New York, 1989
192 pp., $23. Sales No. E.89.II.H.4 ISBN 92-1-123113-2

To assist Governments of developing countries in applying information technologies in the public sector, a UN expert group prepared the guidelines, recommendations and technical papers presented here. The potential value of information systems underscores the importance of what this timely book successfully attempts to do.

Reviewed by:
Professor Harold Fruchtbaum, Columbia University, New York

A Look Back. . . UN Day Concerts

Playing to all in harmony

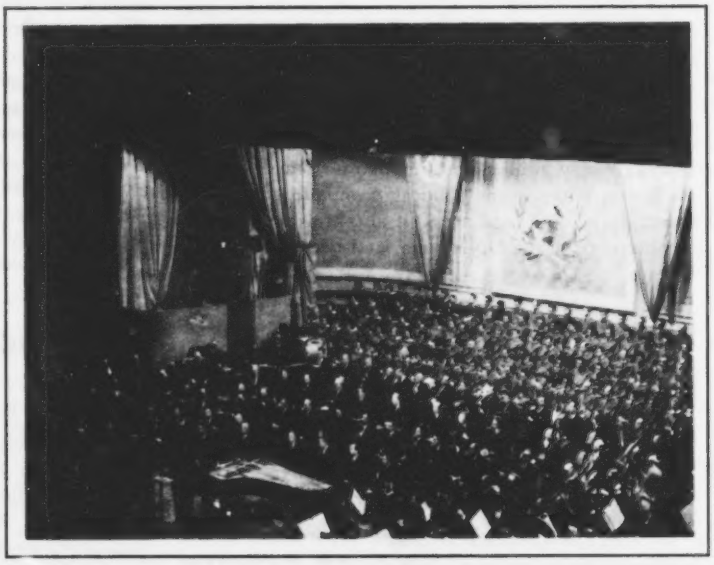
By Elsa B. Endrst

On 24 October, the sometimes dissonant voices speaking in many languages on political topics of all persuasions fall silent, and the walls of the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters reverberate with the harmonious chords and notes of world-class musicians.

The occasion is UN Day, when music becomes the universal language.

Conductors Leonard Bernstein, Sir Georg Solti, Dimitri Mitropoulous, Eugene Ormandy, Seiji Ozawa and Zubin Mehta are among the music world's diplomats who have led orchestras from the UN podium. The great cellist-conductor Pablo Casals, violinists David Oistrakh and Jascha Heifetz, pianists Claudio Arrau and Alicia de Larrocha, singers Renata Tebaldi, Marian Anderson and Dame Joan Sutherland have also lent their considerable talents to this gala event, which is broadcast and telecast throughout the world.

The 1989 UN Day concert featured the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Charles Dutoit, with cellist Yo-Yo Ma as soloist. In 1990, the Czech Symphony led by conductor Vaclav Neumann is expected to play.



UN Photo 24044

The first UN Concert, in Carnegie Hall.

Carnegie Hall

The first UN concert was held at Carnegie Hall in honour of Human Rights Day.

Reminiscing about that first concert held on 10 December 1949, a veteran international civil servant, quoted in *Music at the United Nations*, said: "It was a splendid sight, ablaze with the flags of the Member States draped from the two tiers of boxes where the delegations sat. The concert was to have been performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky, but a short time before, the maestro fell ill and suggested a young and rising conductor to replace him.

"It was Leonard Bernstein. Sir Laurence Olivier travelled from London to read the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Yehudi Menuhin played a Bach chaconne, and as there rang through the old hall the last notes of the 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, there began a tradition which took firm root and flourished."

Concerts held on UN Day, 24 October, began in 1954 under the auspices of then Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold, who declared that they should be held annually.

UN 'impresario'

Martin Bunnel, DPI Executive Producer and "impresario" for UN Day concerts for many years, says that finding a world class orchestra available to play in the northeast United States in the fall of the year is his key concern.

Although the UN does pay a small honorarium for the performance, it cannot cover the cost of bringing a large ensemble to the United States from abroad. The UN must also consider the importance of balance in representing the

different geographical regions from year to year.

The concert stage put in place each year at the front of the Assembly Hall was a gift in 1954 from the IBM Corporation and its Chairman, Thomas J. Watson. IBM was the commercial underwriter for the concert's telecast on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) for many years.

Two rows of delegate desks and seats are removed to make room for the stage, which can accommodate a full symphony orchestra of 100 or more players, a 120-member chorus, several soloists, and the conductor.

"To move them on and off the stage in an orderly fashion is somewhat of a problem," Bunnel says, "as they all have to be channeled through a small antechamber behind the podium". That is where the offices of the UN Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly are located, used on UN Day as dressing rooms for the maestro and soloists.

Concert without instruments?

Concerts are planned three to four years in advance, and the possibility of a last-minute cancellation is always a major concern. And, indeed, there have been some tense moments, Mr. Bunnel says.

One year, the instruments of the Washington Symphony Orchestra did not arrive on schedule. The truck containing them had broken down on the New Jersey Turnpike. Only minutes before their scheduled appearance did the musicians claim their instruments from the just-arrived truck. "Obviously no time for rehearsal that year," Mr. Bunnel recalls.

UN Photo

Maestro Casals at rehearsal, violinist Isaac Stern at right.

Playing in harmony

The UN Secretary-General customarily addresses the concert audience, frequently alluding to the harmony of the musical programme, hoping that it would be extended in the future to other activities in the Assembly Hall.

It was conductor Zubin Mehta who, after a standing ovation in 1982, faced the audience and quietly but firmly inquired: "We wonder why is it that we can play in harmony and you cannot?"

An answer came at the latest concert when Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, reflecting on recent momentous political events, said: "Certainly these days, we see that the concert of nations is beginning to overcome past discord and to enlarge its repertoire, applauded as it does so, by increasingly well-informed and enthusiastic audiences."

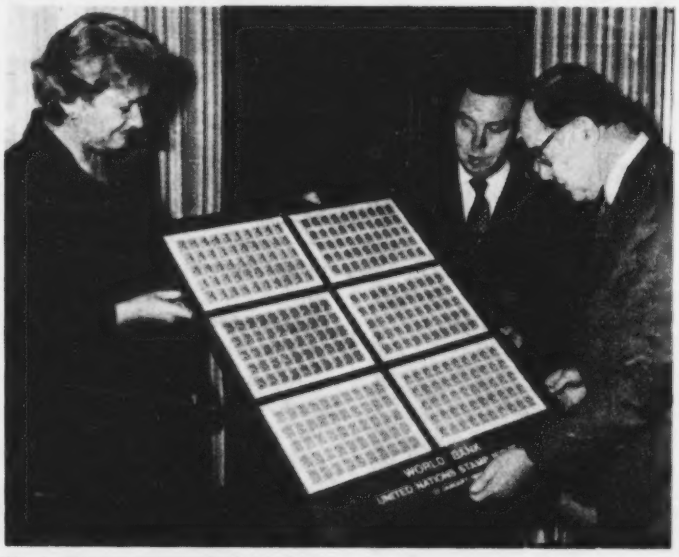
UN Photo/J. Isaac

Martin Bunnel, DPI Executive Producer and organizer of UN Day concerts, reviews the score of Pablo Casals' "Hymn to the United Nations", which premiered at the 1971 concert. It is available from the UN Department of Public Information, Room 827-B, United Nations, New York, 10017.

UN Stamps:

Messengers of Peace

By Elsa B. Endrst



UN Postal Administration Photo

Gisela Grunewald *(left)*, Chief of the United Nations Postal Administration, at a stamp issue ceremony in Washington, D.C., with World Bank President Barber B. Conable *(right)* and Per Sjogren *(centre)*, Director of the Office of General Services at UN Headquarters in New York.

They have been called "Messengers of Peace". And it is an apt title, for every day UN postage stamps relay the goals of the world Organization around the globe.

Since 1951, the UN Postal Administration (UNPA) has issued 860 stamps of different design, all on international themes—human rights, environment, population and development—to name just a few. International days, years and decades have been commemorated. Between 1980 and 1989, the UN issued a series representing the flags of its 159 Member States. All stamps are issued simultaneously at UN post offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna on six dates every year.

In 1947, Argentina proposed the idea of the UN issuing its own postage stamps. Secretary-General Trygve Lie was asked to determine if the United States, as the host country for UN Headquarters, thought the idea feasible.

An agreement was reached with American postal authorities in 1951, with the condition that the stamps be issued in United States denominations, but used only at UN Headquarters in New York. The programme began on UN Day, 24 October 1951. On 4 October 1969, the Geneva branch of UNPA was opened at the Palais des Nations, with the first UN stamps denominated in Swiss francs. The Vienna branch was opened on 24 August 1979 with stamps issued in Austrian schillings.

Special treaties between the UN and the three countries involved provide that the same classes and types of postage will be available at the UN Post Office as at any United States, Swiss or Austrian post office.

These postal services receive revenues from the sale of UN stamps which pay for processing and delivery of the mail. The UN retains the revenues from philatelic sales, which in 1988 amounted to almost $4 million.

Universal themes

Gisela Grunewald, Chief of UNPA, explained that the UN is the only organization in the world which has the privilege of issuing its own postage stamps. Subjects for the six annual issues are chosen to "highlight what the UN really stands

for and what the work of the Organization is really all about," Mrs. Grunewald said.

Themes for 1990 are: international trade (2 February); fighting AIDS worldwide (16 March); medicinal plants (4 May); the 45th anniversary of the UN (26 June); crime prevention (13 September); and human rights (16 November).

Understanding the message of UN stamps is important, Mrs. Grunewald emphasized, because "we have to be understood the world over—we cannot show one aspect of mankind that is not universal".

On 17 November 1989, UNPA began what Mrs. Grunewald believes will be one of the most important projects in its history. As part of the world public information campaign for human rights, UNPA will reproduce chronologically, over a five-year period, the entire text of the 30-article Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Designs for UN stamps are generally chosen through international competitions. So far, contest winners have come from 39 countries.

Another reason to visit the UN

Collectors are among the biggest enthusiasts for UN stamps. Although UNPA in Geneva traditionally produces first-day covers (cachets), an added enticement for philatelists are the first-day covers and limited edition art prints produced by the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA).

A "first day of issue" is an exciting day for UN stamp enthusiasts. Many come to UN post offices with pre-written letters and cards that are given a special "first day" postage mark along with the new stamps. Artists who design WFUNA covers are often on hand to give autographs. Visitors to UN Headquarters in New York on these special "stamp days" in recent years might have met movie star Anthony Quinn, designer Gloria Vanderbilt, or artist Peter Max, for example.

The WFUNA philatelic programme aims to promote the programmes and ideals of the UN, according to its New York director, Annabelle Wiener.

Stamp catalogues may be purchased in English, French or German from UNPA. Collectors may also obtain two short films about the stamp programme—"Messenger of Peace" and "Portrait of Hope". The films may be borrowed, free of charge, in New York, Geneva and Vienna, as well as from UN information centres around the world.

A UN Philatelic Museum, located at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, provides a capsulized history of the stamp programme in three languages.

UN Stamp corner

On 16 March, the UN Postal Administration will issue a set of six stamps with the message "Fight AIDS Worldwide". The stamps, in denominations of United States dollars ($), Swiss francs (SwF), and Austrian schillings (S), were designed by four artists: Jacek Tofil of Poland ($.25, SwF 0,50 and S 5), Fritz Henry Oerter of the Federal Republic of Germany ($.40), Lee Keun Moon of the Republic of Korea (SwF 0,80), and Orlando Pelaez of Colombia (S 11).

Stamps may be ordered by writing to: United Nations Postal Administration, P. O. Box 5900, Grand Central Station, New York, New York 10163-9992, U.S.A. Most commercial stamp dealers around the world also sell UN stamps. But they can only be used at UN postal stations in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

Coming Up. . .

A preview of some important United Nations conferences and events

April—June 1990

New York

26 March-4 April	Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, 5th session
2-6 April	UNITAR—Board of Trustees, 28th session
2-11 April	Commission on Transnational Corporations, 16th session
5-20 April	Committee on Information, 12th session
23-27 April	Special session of the General Assembly on International Economic Co-operation
30 April-4 May	Committee for Development Planning, 26th session
1-25 May	Economic and Social Council, 1st regular session
7 May-1 June	Trusteeship Council, 57th session
7-29 May	Disarmament Commission
7 May-8 June	Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, 30th session
4-15 June	Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, 33rd session
4-15 June	*Ad Hoc* Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the 4th United Nations Development Decade, 4th session
15 June	International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa
18 June-6 July	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, 23rd session

Geneva

2-20 April	Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space—Legal Sub-Committee, 29th session
18-28 April	Economic Commission for Europe, 45th session
23 April-4 May	Committee against Torture, 4th session
1 May-20 July	International Law Commission, 42nd session
28 May-22 June	UNDP Governing Council, 37th session
June-August (12 weeks)	Conference on Disarmament

Vienna

14-18 May	United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, 39th session
21 May-1 June	International Narcotics Control Board, 47th session

Other Locations

April	ECA—16th Meeting of the Conference of Ministers, 25th session, Tripoli
26-28 April	IFAD Executive Board, 39th session, Rome
April-May	UNESCO Executive Board, 134th session, Paris
May-June	Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, 29th session, Rome
25-29 June	UNU Council, 35th session, Tokyo

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